

WINTER OLYMPICS

Army sergeant Sweeney crashes out in final luge run
Page 27



US teen wins halfpipe gold, makes history
Back page

FACES

John Oliver enjoys freedom that goes with show on HBO
Page 17



EUROPE

NATO allies still falling short of US spending goals
Page 3

Scores of Russians killed during assault on US allies in Syria » Page 5

STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 76, No. 215 ©SS 2018

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2018

平成30年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒116-0002 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥50

50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Relevant relic

Cold War-era B-52 on track to outlive younger bombers



By ROBERT BURNS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The B-52, which people have called “aging” for ages, is likely to outlive its younger, snazzier brother bombers, the swing-wing B-1 and the stealthy B-2.

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson announced Monday that her service will begin retiring the B-1 and B-2 fleets as soon as it has built enough B-21s, the next-generation bomber that is on the drawing board and is expected to begin entering service in the mid-2020s. The pace of retirement will depend on how quickly the B-21 is acquired.

An Air Force spokeswoman, Ann Stefanek, said the B-1 and B-2 are likely to keep flying into the early 2030s.

The B-52 is expected to soar past those time-

lines, remaining part of the combat force until mid-century.

Aware of the political ramifications of any change in the structure of the bomber force, Wilson said the number of bomber bases will not shrink.

“If the force structure we have proposed is supported by the Congress, bases that have bombers now will have bombers in the future,” Wilson said. “They will be B-52s and B-21s.”

SEE RELEVANT ON PAGE 2

From left, a B-1B Lancer, a B-2 Spirit and a B-52 Stratofortress fly in formation to honor and commemorate the 8th Air Force's 75th anniversary Feb. 2 near Barksdale Air Force Base, La. The B-1 and B-2 are likely to fly into the 2030s, but the B-52 isn't scheduled for retirement until 2050.

SAGAR PATHAK/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Experts say Pentagon's 2019 budget headed for receptive audience on Hill

By CLAUDIA GRISALEA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Despite questions over a ballooning U.S. deficit and other funding dramas, the 2019 military budget proposal out Monday is poised to win support on Capitol Hill, experts say.

The Pentagon released a plan seeking

a 10 percent increase in funding, asking Congress for \$686.1 billion next year to grow the size and might of the military, primarily in response to China and Russia's growing capabilities.

Experts say that with a deal in place to bust statutory spending limits and Congress invested in military

SEE BUDGET ON PAGE 7

What it means for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines
Page 6

Restrictions on VA properties loosened under Trump's plan
Page 7

No raise for federal workers; their retirement benefits targeted
Page 8

MILITARY

US, Thailand limit talk of Myanmar at Cobra Gold

By Jerry Harmer
Associated Press

U-TAPAO AIR BASE, Thailand — Thailand and the United States downplayed the presence of a Myanmar military officer at the opening Tuesday of the largest annual joint military exercise in Southeast Asia.

Myanmar's military has been accused of human rights violations in its crackdown on the Rohingya Muslim minority, who have fled by the hundreds of thousands to Bangladesh. U.S. lawmakers had demanded Myanmar's exclusion from the exercise.

"The truth is Myanmar is not a participant nation," U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Glyn T. Davies told reporters at the Cobra Gold exercise in eastern Thailand.

"They're not part of the exercises here." He did not explain the Myanmar officer's attendance.

Thai Gen. Thanchaiyan Srisuwan acknowledged inviting Myanmar to the opening ceremony. However, Myanmar's flag was not flown at the ceremonial opening. It's believed the Thai invited Myanmar to send three personnel though only one appeared to be attending.

In Washington last week, both Republican and Democratic members of Congress criticized the invitation to Myanmar. Arizona Sen. John McCain, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, told The Associated Press "militaries engaged in ethnic cleansing should not be honing their skills alongside U.S. troops," a refer-

ence to accounts of atrocities committed by Myanmar troops.

A U.S. statement said 11,075 servicemembers from 29 countries are taking part in this year's exercise, with Thailand, the U.S., Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia the seven main participants. It said the aims of the exercise are to enhance security cooperation, develop peacekeeping forces and maintain readiness for humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions.

The exercise includes humanitarian components, such as evacuation drills, as well as traditional military exercises such as amphibious landings. Disaster relief has assumed a high profile in recent years, especially after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed 230,000 people in 14 coun-



SANKHAI LALITH/AP

From left, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Glyn T. Davies; Thailand's chief of defense forces, Gen. Thanchaiyan Srisuwan; and Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, III Marine Expeditionary Force commanding general, join hands at the opening ceremony of the Cobra Gold 2018 joint exercise at U-tapao Air Base in Thailand, on Tuesday.

tries. Multinational forces mobilized for relief efforts after that crisis, as they did again on a more limited scale after 2008's Cyclone Nargis devastated Myanmar, killing upward of 130,000 people.

Davies, in an indirect reference to such crises, told reporters that "It's very important that everyone from around the region have

an eye on what's happening here and to some extent to be part of it, but I'll come back to what I said earlier that Burma is not a participating nation." Burma, the old name for Myanmar before it was changed by the country's previous military government, is still used by the governments of the U.S. and several other nations.

Relevant: With upgrades, Stratofortress securely in USAF's plans through 2050

FROM FRONT PAGE

Officially nicknamed the Stratofortress and informally known as the Big Ugly Fat Fellow, the B-52 gained lasting fame in Vietnam as an aerial terror. It is scheduled to stay in service until 2050, assuming its gets planned upgrades, including new engines. In its 2019 budget request Monday, the Air Force asked for \$280 million for B-52 upgrades.

Boeing built eight models of

the B-52 between 1952 and 1962. There are 75 planes left, split between Minot Air Force Base, N.D., and Barksdale Air Force, La. No longer the saturation bomber associated with the Vietnam War, the B-52 had been updated and adapted to a range of combat missions. It has been used extensively in the war in Afghanistan as well as in the air campaign against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Just last week, a B-52 pumpeled a Taliban site in northern

Afghanistan.

"The aircraft has played a leading role in Air Force operations for decades, and was recently reconfigured with a conventional rotary launcher to increase its reach and lethality," the U.S. military said in announcing the Afghanistan attack.

The B-1 has an unusual history. It was initially developed in the 1970s, canceled and then revived by President Ronald Reagan. It originally was designed for either

nuclear or conventional attack but is now strictly for non-nuclear combat.

The B-2, the world's first radar-evading bomber, was developed in secrecy by Northrop (now known as Northrop Grumman) in the 1980s and was initially best known for its stunning price tag of more than \$1 billion per aircraft, of which 21 were built.

The Air Force now has 20 B-2s, all based at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., and 62 B-1s at several

bases, including Dyess Air Force Base, Texas.

Delivery in S. Korea

Lunar new year celebrations will affect delivery of Stars and Stripes in South Korea this week.

The editions for Thursday and Friday will be delivered on Saturday.

TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 16
- Business 18
- Classified 19, 23
- Comics 22
- Crossword 22
- Faces 17
- Opinion 20-21
- Sports 24-32
- Weather 18

STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us,
wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

EUROPE

KRISTI KIMMEL

ADVERTISING

kimmel.kristi@stripes.com

+49 (0) 631-3615-9013

MIDDLE EAST

KRISTI KIMMEL

ADVERTISING

kimmel.kristi@stripes.com

+49 (0) 631-3615-9013

PACIFIC

YUKO SAITO

ADVERTISING

CustomerHelp@Stripes.com

+81(3) 6385.3267 DSN 315.229.3267

STARS AND STRIPES

honors Vietnam at 50 with a keepsake map* inside its paper on Feb. 15!

*Inserts into Germany papers only.



EUROPE

NATO struggles to meet US spending demands

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Nearly half of NATO allies are still not on track to meet defense spending goals, falling well short of an alliance pledge that also has become a U.S. demand for all 29 members.

Based on current spending projections, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday that he expects 15 allies to spend at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense by 2024. In 2014, NATO agreed that within 10 years all members would hit the spending target.

"What we have seen so far is a good start, but we still have a long way to go," Stoltenberg said at a news conference in Brussels that

came ahead of a meeting Wednesday of NATO defense ministers.

In 2018, eight allies are expected to reach the 2 percent benchmark, up from just three in 2014, Stoltenberg said.

However, for Washington, the failure of many European countries to dedicate more resources to defense or lay clear plans for reaching spending goals has long been a political flashpoint. President Donald Trump has made the issue the focal point for his dealings with NATO, frequently calling out allies for their spending shortcomings and suggesting that U.S. commitment to the alliance hinges on members boosting their defense investments.

Last year, Defense Secretary

'What we have seen so far is a good start, but we still have a long way to go.'

Jens Stoltenberg
NATO secretary-general

Jim Mattis, during his first visit to NATO headquarters, put the U.S. demands in stark terms.

"America will meet its responsibilities, but if your nations do not want to see America moderate its commitment to this alliance, each of your capitals needs to show support for our common defense," Mattis said in February 2017.

On Wednesday, Mattis will be back in Brussels, where defense

spending again will be on the agenda. Much focus will likely be on Germany, Europe's economic power, which still spends only a little over 1 percent of its GDP on defense.

Still, Stoltenberg highlighted the progress on defense spending in recent years, noting that allies have stopped their cuts and have begun gradually increasing their budgets.

NATO allies aside from the U.S. have added \$46 billion to defense budgets in the last three years, Stoltenberg said. European allies and Canada also have invested \$19 billion more on major equipment during that same time, with 22 allies expected to invest 20 percent or more of their defense budgets on major capabilities by 2024.

"This should lead to significant improvements to our forces and their readiness," Stoltenberg said.

However, pressure will remain on NATO to ramp up spending across the board, which is a drum Stoltenberg said he still continues to beat.

"We have to deliver," he said.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

Ohio Guardsmen deploy on wintry weather mission in Baltics

By MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

TALLINN, Estonia — Most people wouldn't leave a \$40 million vehicle outside under a foot of snow, but most people don't have to.

The Ohio Air National Guardsmen maintaining their F-16 fighter jets amid a northern Baltic winter do have one small, Soviet-era hangar, scheduled for demolition, that they use sparingly. Normally, they keep their planes out on the flight line.

"You have to work a little slower and make sure everything is ready and safe, but it hasn't taken away from our training," said Senior Master Sgt. Tim Golden.

Seven fresh pilots have joined the 300 Air Force personnel who are midway through their busy deployment practicing dogfighting above the Baltic Sea as part of the U.S. Theater Security Package. The mission brought 12 F-16 fighter jets to Estonia's Amari Air Base to train with NATO allies and partner nations in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

The jets have been flying an average of about 60 missions every week. NATO has had an air-policing mission over the three small Baltic nations — which don't have fighter jets — since 2004.

The Midwestern men and women working here are no strangers to wintry weather missions, though they say Estonia is significantly icier than back home. One reason the weather hasn't been too bad for them is the Estonian de-icing equipment, which is hailed as the "best in NATO" by the airmen.

"It's really impressive to watch them clear away ice and snow," said Golden, who described the synchronized movements of the de-icing vehicles as "watching an opera."

The deployment is not all work and cold, though. Due to the lack of facilities at Amari Air Base, the airmen are staying in swank but affordable hotels in downtown Tallinn, where they get the opportunity to see the old town, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

"The old town is the main place where everyone goes after work," Staff Sgt. Devon Childress said. "It's just a few minutes away and has some amazing sights, great food and a lot to do."

So far, several of them have thoroughly enjoyed the local delicacies, such as freshly caught salmon, beet and apple salad, and the heavy use of dill seasoning, he said.

The local drink of choice, Vana Tallinn, a rum-based liqueur that tastes like cinnamon, has gone down less smoothly for the Americans, Childress said. "It's too sweet for American taste buds, but it's something you have to try when you come here."

The Americans have also seen the former Soviet submarine base nearby and medieval castles that belonged to Teutonic Knights from the 13th century.

"It's important that the airmen get out and explore the area," Golden said. "The one thing you don't want is to have 300 (airmen) sitting around bored with nothing to do. That's when something (bad) happens."

Theater Security packages like this took shape after Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. Since then, contingents of airmen have spent similar quick deployments elsewhere in Eastern Europe. This is the first security package to bring F-16s to Estonia.

The local servicemembers are happy to see the U.S. airmen bringing so much firepower to aid their defense, Golden said.

"You can tell they are very supportive of us being here," Golden said. "They know why we are here and why it's so important that we have a forward presence in the region."

egnash.martin@stripes.com
Twitter: @Marty_Stripes



PHOTOS BY MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

Ohio Air National Guardsmen de-ice an F-16 at the Amari Air Base in Amari, Estonia, on Tuesday, above, and clear snow from the flight line, below.



MILITARY

Study: DOD health coverage for women below par globally

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

American servicewomen receive "below average" reproductive health coverage compared with that of their counterparts in the armed forces of many other countries, according to a study released Tuesday by a pro-abortion group.

In particular, access to abortions by U.S. women in uniform is far more limited compared with that of those who serve in almost two dozen countries that researchers rated "exceptional," from Canada and the United Kingdom to Nepal, Turkey and South Africa.

The study was published by This Reproductive Health, a nonprofit research organization whose website says it promotes increasing access to safe abortion as well as "expanding contraceptive access and choices" and "comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services."

Based on complete data received from 31 countries and partial data from eight others, researchers found that 25 countries fully covered abortion services for their servicewomen. Among other countries rated exceptional were Denmark, France, Norway, Portugal, Israel, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

The Defense Department's military health system covers abortions only in the cases of rape, incest or when a pregnant woman's life is in danger. That coverage became available with the inclusion of the so-called Shaheen Amendment in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

Servicewomen seeking an abortion for any other reason must use civilian facilities at their own expense.

A study published in the fall in the journal *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* found that in some cases, the U.S. military's restrictive abortion policy has had negative effects on servicewomen's health, careers, finances and emotional well-being.

Abortion has been legal in the United States since the Supreme Court's landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, but states can and do restrict it to varying degrees.

The new research was undertaken to "situate the U.S. military's abortion policy within the global context," said Jane Seymour, a co-author of the study and a project manager at This.

The research was done in collaboration with Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health at the University of California-San Francisco.

The survey was conducted from August 2014 through February 2016. Countries were deemed eligible for the survey if women had a similar role in the armed forces and if the nation had "liberal or

liberally interpreted abortion laws, defined as permitting abortion for economic or social reasons or upon request," the study said. "We knew the context in the U.S. military, but we did not have a full understanding of what militaries worldwide from countries with liberally interpreted laws looked like," Seymour said.

"I think the takeaway from this is that the U.S. has one of the largest militaries in the world, including 200,000 female active-duty servicemembers, but it really is out of step with the majority of other militaries in the world from countries where abortion is widely legal. It's out of step with the policies of those militaries."

Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Greece, Bulgaria and Belgium also were rated below average.

About 30 countries eligible for the survey, including China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam, did not provide usable data. India provided incomplete data and did not receive a ranking. "We believe these data indicate that providing access to and coverage of contraceptives and safe abortion is really in line with what other countries are doing and that the U.S. should be doing the same," Seymour said.

The study also found that of the 32 countries providing data on deployments, 66 percent of them required deployed women to return to their home country for abortion services. About half the 39 countries surveyed provide full public funding for abortions for civilians. That funding correlates strongly with the availability of abortion coverage in the armed forces of those nations.

The report recommends that the Defense Department's health system policy be amended to include coverage for abortion and that military treatment facilities be allowed to perform the procedures. In the absence of that change, the study recommended that the Defense Department establish abortion referral and support guidelines for servicewomen who will need to seek the procedure outside the military system.

olson.wyatt@stripes.com
Twitter: @WyattW0lson



The U.S. Air Forces in Europe Band entertains spectators at the 67th annual Ramstein-Miesenbach Fasching parade Tuesday in Germany.

MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Americans experience Germany's wacky culture at Fasching parade

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN-MIESENBACH, Germany — Americans living in the Kaiserslautern area of Germany didn't have to go far Tuesday to experience the crazy side of German culture during Fasching.

Ramstein-Miesenbach threw its 67th annual Fasching parade, capping what's known as carnival season in Germany with a grand display of elaborate floats, marching bands and costumed revelers. The parade, sponsored by the Bruchkatze Carnival Association, is the biggest in the Westpfalz area, with about 1,000 participants.

Americans in the crowds that lined the streets of the village outside of Ramstein Air Base said they came for the unique German experience.

"We just want to do what the locals do," said Army spouse Jen Crawford, who was at the parade

with friends and their children, wearing a green and blue wig. "We try to get out and do whatever we can. Where else can you dress up in wacky costumes?"

And there was plenty of wacky. A gardening club, with garden watering cans upside down on their heads with a space cut out for their faces. The "Bike for Peace and New Energies Kaiserslautern" group rode funny bikes, tooted horns and included someone wearing a Donald Trump mask.

Will McKee, 12, an American who was using his day off from school wisely, fit right in wearing a pink Whoopie cushion costume ordered from Target. His sister, Kayla, 8, was dressed as a cat. The McKees and their friends, who

staked out a place curbside, didn't hesitate in stating their goal for the parade: "The candy!"

Candy and confetti rained down throughout the hourlong spectacle. "Candy landed on my head," said one boy dressed as Batman.

There were flying bags of popcorn and, for the adults, samples of a drink that tasted like a Bailey's Irish Cream milkshake. Groups pulled beer wagons, beverages that surely helped with the dancing and singing along to songs like "Macarena" before thousands of strangers.

Also raining down were Fasching greetings of "Ralaui, Helau!" and something that sounded like "Hi Hoop!"

Among the U.S. parade participants were the Ramstein Fire Department, the Roller Girls of the Apocalypse and the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Band.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripesktown

Gorbachev against US bases on Okinawa

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is backing Okinawa's fervent anti-base movement, according to the southern island prefecture's oldest daily newspaper.

A recent report in the *Ryukyuu Shimpo* — widely seen as having an anti-U.S. military slant — said the Nobel laureate sent a written message to the publication late last month that was addressed to the people of Okinawa.

The message from Gorbachev, who led the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991, was not printed in its entirety and could not be independently verified. However, a summary published by the newspaper promoted nuclear disarmament and showed support for protesters fighting the relocation of air operations from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to Camp Schwab.

"I have argued against the use of military force in resolving international disputes," Gorbachev said, according to the report.

"From this perspective, I have invariably supported the struggle against military expansion in Okinawa by the people of Okinawa, and I will support it from here on out."

The message did not elaborate on how Gorbachev planned to back the anti-base demonstrators, who for decades have been dedicated to expelling American forces from the island. Crime, pollution and aircraft safety are among their chief concerns.

burke.matt@stripes.com

HAMAGAWA LODGE

CALL FOR RESERVATIONS!

Friendly English speaking staff

(098)-936-7139

Office 9-6 Mon.-Fri., 9-1 Sat., closed Sun.

72hamagawa@gmail.com

Kadena Gate 1

Chinese Restaurant

Hammagawa Lodge

San An

Free & unlimited
Internet (Wi-Fi)
access

★ Fully Furnished Living & Dining Room and Kitchenette.

★ Free large parking area, Cable TV and Pets always welcome.

★ Conveniently located near Kadena Air Base, Camp Foster.

WAR ON TERRORISM

US Syria strikes killed scores of Russian fighters

Bloomberg

U.S. forces killed scores of Russian contract soldiers in Syria last week in what may be the deadliest clash between citizens of the former foes since the Cold War, according to a U.S. official and three Russians familiar with the matter.

More than 200 mercenaries, mostly Russians fighting on behalf of Syrian leader Bashar Assad, died in a failed attack on a base and refinery held by the U.S. and U.S.-backed forces in the oil-rich Deir el-Zour region, two of the Russians said. The U.S. official put the death toll at about 100, with 200 to 300 injured.

The Russian assault may have been a rogue operation, underscoring the complexity of a conflict that started as a domestic crackdown, only to morph into a proxy war involving Islamic extremists, stateless Kurds and regional powers Iran, Turkey and now Israel. Russia's military said it had nothing to do with the attack, and the U.S. military accepted the claim. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis called the whole thing "perplexing" but provided no further details.

"Coalition officials were in regular communication with Russian counterparts before, during and after the attack," U.S. Col. Thomas F. Veale, a military spokesman, said in a statement. "Russian officials assured coalition officials they would not engage coalition forces in the vicinity."

The offensive began about 5

In second 'self-defense' strike in week, US destroys pro-regime tank

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — An American drone attack Saturday in eastern Syria destroyed a pro-regime tank after it shot at U.S.-backed anti-Islamic State forces and their American military advisers. It was the second "self-defense" strike in recent days, a top general said Tuesday.

An MQ-9 Reaper destroyed the T-72 tank operated by forces backing Syrian President Bashar Assad. It had approached the Syrian Democratic Forces fighting the remnants of ISIS along the Euphrates River, said Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Harrigan, U.S. Air Forces Central commander. He declined to identify which group the Russian-made tank belonged to, saying it was likely from the same pro-Assad unit that attacked an SDF headquarters element on Feb. 7 in eastern Syria.

"We were doing normal operations — getting back after ISIS and ensuring our area was secure — when we saw the tank took a shot at us. ... We again executed self-defense rules of engagement," Harrigan said of the Saturday attack. "That is

something we always have the right to do."

The strike Saturday was the only recent report attack against SDF fighters by pro-regime forces following the Feb. 7 artillery and tank assault by the same group. U.S. ground commanders ordered a massive response to that assault — which included several hundred pro-regime fighters — tasking F-15E fighters, B-52 bombers, AH-64 attack helicopters, MQ-9 Reaper drones, AC-130 gunships and ground-based artillery to bombard the attackers, Harrigan said.

The general declined to say how many bombs were used in that three-hour counterassault, which eventually drove away the pro-regime forces, destroying several of their tanks and artillery pieces.

He warned against pro-Assad or other forces targeting U.S.-backed groups or American military advisers.

"It should be crystal clear to anyone that's going to attempt to prosecute an attack on us that it will be a very long day for them," Harrigan said.

dickstein.corey@stripes.com
Twitter: @CDicksteinDC

miles east of the Euphrates River deconfliction line late on Feb. 7, when adversaries fired rounds and advanced in a "battalion-sized dismounted formation supported by artillery, tanks, multiple-launch rocket systems and mortars," Veale said. No fatalities were reported on the coalition side, and "enemy vehicles and personnel who turned around and headed

back west were not targeted."

The government in Damascus called the U.S. action "barbaric aggression" and a "war crime."

The death toll from the incident, already about five times more than Russia's official losses since it entered the war in 2015, is still rising, according to one mercenary commander. He said by phone on condition of anonymity that doz-

ens of his wounded men are still being treated at military hospitals in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Many of the Russians killed or injured were veterans of the Ukraine conflict, according to Alexander Ionov, the head of a Kremlin-funded organization that fosters ties to separatists who has fought alongside pro-Assad forces in Syria. It's not clear who was

paying the soldiers of fortune — whether it was Russia directly, its allies in the war, Syria and Iran, or a third party.

Reports in local media have said Wagner — a shadowy organization often referred to as Russia's answer to Blackwater, the U.S. military company now called Academi — was hired by Assad or his allies to guard Syrian energy facilities in exchange for oil concessions.

There's a refinery in Deir el-Zour that once funded Islamic State operations that's now "crucial" to Assad's plans to finance the reconstruction of Syria once a peace deal is reached, according to Yuri Barmin, a Middle East analyst at the Russian International Affairs Council in Moscow.

Russia's Defense Ministry seemed to refer to the refinery in its statement about the attack, accusing the U.S. of using its "illegal presence" in Syria as an excuse to "seize economic assets" instead of fighting terrorists.

Vladimir Frolov, a former Russian diplomat and lawmaker who's now an independent political analyst in Moscow, said the clash marked the first such armed exchange between the two powers since the Vietnam War.

"This is a big scandal and a reason for an acute international crisis," Frolov said. "But Russia will pretend nothing happened."

Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, declined to comment on reports that Russian nationals were killed in Syria, saying the Kremlin tracks data on only the country's armed forces.

US urges anti-ISIS coalition to refocus

By MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

KUWAIT CITY — The Trump administration, increasingly concerned that the 74-strong coalition it cobbled together to destroy the Islamic State is losing sight of the prime objective, pressed its partners Tuesday to refocus their efforts, overcome rivalries and concentrate on the task at hand: the eradication from Iraq and Syria of the extremist group.

At the alarm U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson sounded at a coalition gathering in Kuwait came as the fight reached a critical moment and the mission shifted from offensive military operations to stabilization.

Distractions are adding up, such as Turkey's fighting unprovoked Kurdish rebels in Syria and intensifying anti-American rhetoric from Turkish leaders. Meanwhile, renewed spillover from Syria's civil war, including hostilities between noncoalition actors — Iran, its proxies in Syria and Israel — risk creating a new conflict in an already crowded battle space.

'The end of major combat operations does not mean we have achieved the enduring defeat of ISIS.'

Rex Tillerson
U.S. secretary of state

"ISIS remains a serious threat to the stability of the region, our homelands and other parts of the globe," he said. "Without continued attention and support from coalition members, we risk the return of extremist groups like ISIS in liberated areas of Iraq and Syria and their spread to new locations."

Tillerson announced that the United States would contribute an additional \$200 million "to further support critical stabilization and early recovery initiatives in liberated areas of Syria," bringing Washington's total contribution to humanitarian efforts to nearly \$7.9 billion since the conflict in Syria began in 2011.

It was not immediately clear how that money would be distributed. Tillerson reaffirmed that the U.S. "would maintain a conditions-based and ISIS-focused military presence in Syria" that would in part continue to train local security forces.

U.S. officials said the thrust of Tillerson's message was that "eyes have to be on the prize" and anything that hinders ISIS' defeat will impair broader objectives such as a political transition in Syria that ultimately leads to an end of the war and blunts Iranian behavior throughout the region.

Rising tensions between the U.S. and NATO ally Turkey over Turkish military operations against the Syrian Kurds are a primary concern.

Tillerson will end his five-night swing through the region in Ankara on Friday after stops in Jordan and Lebanon.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ramped up his criticism of the U.S. on Tuesday, reacting angrily to reports that the Trump administration has proposed a boost in funding to Syrian Kurdish militia in its proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

Erdogan also took aim at comments from U.S. commanders in northern Syria who said any attack on them or Kurdish partners would be met with force.

"To those who say, 'If they hit us, we will respond with force,' it is clear that they have never experienced the Ottoman slap," Erdogan said.

INJURED?
CIVILIAN WORKERS
(INCLUDING NON-US CITIZENS)
KNOW AND PROTECT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS
D.B.A./N.A.F. ATTORNEYS

www.injuredoverseas.com
Phone: 954.920.7400 US Toll Free: 888.732.7425

LAW OFFICES OF BARNETT & LERNER, P.A.
FREE CONSULTATION

MILITARY DISCOUNTS

ABC
your TRAVEL SERVICE

Need help? Call us!
0621-72920

MILITARY FLIGHTS
For all Military ID card holders and their family members:

Los Angeles	\$52
Charlotte	470
Dallas	496
Las Vegas	482
Washington	465
Atlanta	492
Fort Myers	491
San Francisco	532

www.abctravel.de

Flights from Dec. 25, 17 to Apr. 6, 18. RT from 60 Germany. Prices starting from, including all taxes, based on availability. Get Military discount rates all year! ABC Travel Service K., Co. #083901100000

2019 BUDGET

Navy seeks 7 percent budget hike

By DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — After playing two years of readiness catch-up, the Navy wants to expand its strength and fighting capabilities in fiscal year 2019 to meet the demand for a “more lethal, resilient and agile force,” the Navy said in the presidential budget request released to Congress on Monday.

The Navy seeks \$151.4 billion, along with \$13.7 billion for Overseas Contingency



Operations, a sharp increase over the \$717 billion for the war fund for 2018. The request is \$12.6 billion above fiscal year 2018 — a 7 percent increase.

Procurement has the sharpest rise, at more than \$8 billion, and personnel costs are up by more than \$2 billion. The request will allow the Navy to build 10 warships and eight support vessels to bring the ship count to 299; add 7,500 active-duty personnel to reach 335,400; and add 120 new manned and unmanned aircraft.

The budget request includes a five-year growth projection, with Navy active-duty manpower climbing to 344,800 by 2023; construction of 111 vessels including 54

warships; and 655 new aircraft.

Rear Adm. Brian Luther, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for budget, described the demands on America’s sea services around the globe as laid out in the new National Defense Strategy. The Navy and Marine Corps are being called upon to meet an “increasingly complex security environment” fraught with growing competition, particularly in the maritime domain, where shipping traffic represents 90 percent of global trade, he said Monday.

Luther described the emergence of great power competitors and unconventional forces, state and nonstate actors and humanitarian demands on the Navy like the triple punch of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria last fall.

Luther showed a map of the world with hundreds of lines depicting international undersea cables that carry 99 percent of international data transmissions; natural and oil resources dotting shores and waterways; global shipping channels and emerging lanes where ice caps are melting; international conflict zones or hot spots; and military bases.

“Trade, information resources and free access to all are critically important to the continued prosperity of the global economy,” he said.

Under the 2019 budget, the Navy says it can sustain 11 aircraft carriers and 33 large amphibious ships that serve as the fleet’s foundation. It will take possession of two nuclear attack submarines, four

littoral combat ships, one expeditionary fast transport ship, one expeditionary sea base, one amphibious assault ship and two destroyers. One nuclear attack submarine will be retired.

The request for \$21.9 billion for shipbuilding includes funding for two Virginia-class submarines, one of which will include the modernized Virginia Payload Module missile launch tubes; three DDG 51 Arleigh Burke destroyers that will include air and missile defense radar; two others; an expeditionary sea base; and a towing, salvage and rescue ship. It also includes the procurement of the last littoral combat ship, and will serve as a bridge to sustain private shipbuilders until the Navy can begin construction of its replacement, the FFG(X) frigate, Luther said Monday.

The budget proposes \$1.1 billion for aircraft acquisition that includes more than \$11.7 billion for combat aircraft. The request more than doubles the number of F-35C aircraft for carriers, going from four in 2018 to nine in the 2019 request.

With the Navy’s fleet of F/A-18A-D Hornets reaching the end of its service life before the Navy can acquire sufficient F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, the 2019 budget seeks 24 F/A-18E/F Super Hornets to tide the Navy over, for nearly \$2 billion. The Navy plans to add 97 F-35Cs and 101 F-35Bs over five years.

cahn.dianna@stripes.com
Twitter: @diannacahn

AF boost would help fight global threats

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force said Monday that a proposal to boost its annual budget in 2019 by \$10 billion will help accelerate the service’s readiness and modernization efforts in the face of new global threats.

Under the \$156.3 billion plan, the Air Force would see a 2.6 percent pay increase proposed for all servicemembers, boost its military force by 4,700 to 506,200 and grow its bomber force for its new B-21 Raider fleet.

The budget will help the service meet the demands of the new National Defense Strategy, which last month said the U.S. is in a national security race against China



and Russia and faces emerging threats from North Korea and Iran.

“The United States now faces a more competitive and dangerous international security environment than we have seen for generations,” Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson said in an overview of the 2019 fiscal year request. “The Air Force must build a more lethal and ready force.”

The request is part of an overall budget proposal released by President Donald Trump’s administration Monday. Some 2019 budget figures were leaked in recent weeks, but specific spending requests for each of the services were released to Congress on Monday.

On Friday, lawmakers reached a deal to

lift statutory spending limits for defense and nondefense spending. That budget-cap deal sets a spending guide but doesn’t appropriate the money.

For now, the Pentagon, like the rest of the government, is operating off a temporary funding plan — the fifth since the 2018 fiscal year began Oct. 1 — and by March 23 will need another funding measure in place to keep the government’s lights on.

Friday’s deal lifts a \$549 billion budget cap for defense spending in 2018 to \$629 billion and puts \$71 billion in a war account known as Overseas Contingency Operations, for a total of \$700 billion. The 2019 plan lifts a \$562 billion budget cap to \$647 billion and puts \$69 billion in the war fund for a total of \$176 billion.

grisales.claudia@stripes.com
Twitter: @cgrisales

Marine Corps eyes boost in end strength

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Marine Corps would get a 1 percent boost in end strength under the Pentagon’s budget proposal released Monday, accounting for 1,100 of about 15,000 active-duty servicemembers that would be added in fiscal 2019 if Congress approves the plan.

The request was made as part of President Donald Trump’s budget proposal for fiscal 2019, which includes more than \$686 billion for the Department of Defense. Pentagon budget documents emphasized the need for stable and predictable funding after operating through the current fiscal year under stop-gap funding measures that limited spending to 2017 levels.



ment of the Navy budget — would grow its active-duty force from 185,000 to 186,100. The Reserve component would remain the same at 38,500. The Navy would grow

by 7,500 sailors. About 54 percent of the Marine Corps’ fiscal 2019 budget would go toward personnel — the key asset of the U.S. military’s crisis reaction force.

The proposal states the increases are needed in order to “deter aggression” and respond to emerging security threats, including terrorist groups, disease and natural disasters.

In addition to the modest increase to Marine Corps end strength, the proposal would provide a boost to the service’s air defense. Under the plan, the Marine Corps would receive 20 new F-35s and eight CH-53K helicopters.

The fiscal 2019 budget proposal comes as Congress is working on a deal for the current fiscal year. The Pentagon is currently operating with a funding plan — the fifth since the 2018 year began Oct. 1 — and by March 23 will need another funding measure in place to keep the government open. Pentagon funding documents said Monday the series of temporary funding measures “contributes to the erosion of our military advantage.”

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling

Army would increase its active force

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army wants to grow its active force by 4,000 soldiers and speed up modernization programs for key warfighting platforms as it seeks to regain its “eroded” battlefield advantage over potential foes including Russia and China, according to 2019 budget request documents.

President Donald Trump’s budget request for fiscal year 2019, released Monday, included a \$182 billion request for the Army that adds troops and seeks to field upgraded tanks, armored fighting vehicles and artillery systems more quickly than planned. It’s a reversal from recent budget requests that deferred modernization programs to focus on rebuilding units’ combat readiness.



“The Army is at a deflection point,” David Welch, the Army’s deputy budget director, said Monday. “We can no longer afford to defer maintenance. We must expand capabilities and we must develop new ones.”

The service intends to pour \$32.1 billion into procurement of weapons systems and research and design for future programs, a \$4.2 billion increase over its request for 2018. The 2018 budget has yet to be enacted by Congress, leaving the Defense Department largely operating at fiscal year 2017 levels.

The Army for several years chose to focus its funds on training for soldiers, but with the emergence of “great power competition” with rivals such as Russia and China, the Pentagon is now asking it to update its technology to be decidedly better than that of any potential enemy.

“Over the past several years under constrained budgets, the Army endeavored to balance, but ended up prioritizing near-term readiness over modernization,” Welch said. “With our FY19 request ... the Army more robustly addresses its modernization needs, strengthening our formations with superior capabilities” than those of Russia or China.

The modernization money would fund long-term projects like the Army’s program to develop its next generations of helicopters and combat vehicles and to upgrade its communications networks. It would speed up the procurement of upgraded M1 Abrams tanks, M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles and M109 Paladin self-propelled howitzers.

The budget request seeks to add 4,000 soldiers to the Army’s active-duty force, which would bring the service to 487,500. It does not request increased end strength for the Army National Guard or the Reserve, which would bring the service to 1,020,500 soldiers. The request would add 4,000 soldiers to its active force each year until 2021, when it would reach 495,500.

The new troops would primarily fill existing gaps in brigade combat teams, Army Secretary Mark Esper told Stars and Stripes. However, the increase in force strength will also help service to build its new Security Force Assistance Brigades.

The Army plans to add three of the specialty units designed to train, advise and assist indigenous military partners such as the Afghan or Iraqi security forces next year, according to the documents. “The Army has one SFAAB built and another in its initial stages.”

dickstein.corey@stripes.com
Twitter: @CDicksteinDC

2019 BUDGET

VA slated to receive \$198.6B

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs would get another multibillion-dollar increase in 2019 under President Donald Trump's new budget proposal.

The proposal, released Monday, asks for \$198.6 billion for the VA for fiscal 2019 — significantly more than the \$186 billion budget that Congress is working to approve for the current fiscal year. It places emphasis on mental health care, information technology, access to private-sector medical care and efforts to stop waste, fraud and abuse.

"The 2019 budget reflects the strong commitment of the president to provide the services and benefits that our nation's veterans have earned," VA Secretary David Shulkin said in a written statement.

Trump's budget proposal, an overview of priorities for the administration, was shared with Congress on Monday. Shulkin is expected to answer questions about the request Thursday morning during a hearing of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

While the proposal includes an overall increase for the VA, it includes ideas to cut millions of dollars from specific programs. According to the budget document, the savings would be used to implement expected reforms to the VA Choice program, which allows veterans to receive medical care in the private sector.

The White House is again offering a controversial proposal to round-down cost-of-living adjustments to the nearest dollar amount for all veterans who receive disability compensation. The practice was standard until 2013, and there have been numerous attempts to reinstate it.

Plan greenlights the sale, leasing of VA properties

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A proposal to loosen regulations and enable the Department of Veterans Affairs to sell and lease property was included Monday in President Donald Trump's long-awaited, \$1.5 trillion plan to improve American infrastructure.

The plan, promised since his presidential campaign and officially rolled out Monday, asks Congress to create legislation initiating work on roads, bridges, railroads, airports and other infrastructure nationwide, and tasks lawmakers with finding a way to pay for it. VA facilities — some of which VA Secretary David Shulkin has described as outdated and unusable — are also addressed in the plan.

"My Administration's plan addresses more than traditional infrastructure... but addresses other needs like drinking and wastewater systems, waterways, water resources, energy, rural infrastructure, public lands, veterans' hospitals, and Brownfield and Superfund sites," Trump wrote in the preamble to his proposal.

The infrastructure plan addresses VA property by pro-

posing to loosen regulations that keep the agency from leasing facilities or profiting off the sale of unwanted buildings or land.

Under current law, the VA can't keep profits from selling properties, and it can't exchange its current facilities for new ones. Trump's plan proposes to change that. Allowing the agency to collect off its property sales could help fund renovations and new construction, the plan states.

The proposal also aims to limit the instances in which the VA would have to go to Congress for approval to lease a facility. Now, the agency must gain congressional approval for any lease totaling more than \$1 million annually. The rule has led to yearlong delays in leasing new facilities. In August, Congress approved 28 leases for VA clinics across the country, some of which had been awaiting approval for more than two years.

The infrastructure plan would require the VA to receive approval from Congress only for leases totaling more than \$3.1 million.

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling



Budget: Challenges still ahead

FROM FRONT PAGE

improvements in an election year, the budget plans are poised to win Hill support.

"The amount of the budget, I don't expect a problem there. Everyone signed off there," said Mark Cancian, a senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "It should be an easier year this year, assuming nothing blows up."

The Defense Department's request for fiscal year 2019, which begins Oct. 1, seeks an increase of more than 15,000 active-duty troops and investment in key modernization programs. Pentagon budget writers faced a challenge predicting lawmakers' plans before Friday's deal to lift 2019 defense spending caps to \$716 billion.

"Given that the DOD request was locked and loaded before Friday's budget deal was confirmed, this budget will have less impact than other years," said Lauren Fish, a defense strategies research associate for the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank. "They just didn't know the state of the political operating environment on the Hill when drafting the request. However, the top lines match up. The president requested \$716 billion for national defense, which is what Congress is prepared to give him."

The budget represents a \$74 billion increase over the Defense Department's current funding. It calls for \$61.7 billion in base funding and \$69 billion for the Overseas Contingency Operations war fund. The request does not include national defense money for other agencies that contribute to the overall \$716 billion request.

"I want to thank you and the president for negotiating a budget agreement that gives long overdue relief to the military," Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., told Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney during a Senate budget hearing Tuesday.

President Donald Trump's overall \$4.4 trillion budget proposal was met with controversy for adding \$7 trillion to the U.S. deficit. By 2028, the deficit is on track to nearly eclipse the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, a benchmark of a country's economic health. But the Pentagon's secured

immune to much of the concern, except from fiscal hawks worried that the military increases would add to the deficit.

"I know that our military leaders would tell us that our deficits are the greatest threat to our nation," Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., and member of the Senate Budget Committee, during Tuesday's hearing. "Not Russia, not ISIS, not the many things we are dealing with in the Middle East and around the world, but our debt."

The first priority of the 2019 budget was to address national security, Mulvaney said. "It's a lot more fun to spend money than it is to reduce," he admitted. "It's incumbent upon all of us to start making difficult decisions to decide together as a legislature and as an administration: Are these deficits that we are willing to tolerate?"

In the meantime, it's key to rein in wasteful spending, which could be helped by the first-time Defense Department audit, which could start marking new savings by September, Mulvaney said.

Cancian said one of the weaknesses of the new military budget proposal was the absence of management reform or base closures through the Base Realignment and Closure process. "You can get savings, but you have to invest some political capital," he said. "Making cuts is hard."

Even after lawmakers reached a deal Friday to lift mandatory defense spending caps, they have yet to pass a full Pentagon budget for 2018 and 2019. Lawmakers will need to issue an appropriations plan by a March 23 deadline. "The biggest challenge will be keeping in step with the plan as other distractions arise," Fish said. "Hopefully, the needed modernization and improved readiness this budget promises will keep the joint force prepared for any contingencies, but a flare-up around the globe would divert attention and resources."

Cancian suggests it's possible lawmakers will finally sign off on a 2018 budget by March. By then, lawmakers might have a 2019 budget resolution that previews military spending.

Stars and Stripes reporter Corey Dickstein contributed to this story. gtrisales.claudia@stripes.com
Twitter: @cgrisales

STARS AND STRIPES

Have a subscription question or issue? We're here for you!

Contact us
Email: memberservices@stripes.com
Phone: CIV: 0049 631 3615 9111 or DSN: 583-9111
Hours: 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

2019 BUDGET

Proposal targets federal employees' pay, benefits

By ERIC YODER
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration budget proposal targets federal employee pay and benefits while calling for an overhaul of what it called an “increasingly incomprehensible and unmanageable civil service system.”

The spending plan released Monday proposes federal employee raises for January 2019, in contrast to the White House's recommendation last year for an average 1.9 percent increase that took effect last month.

“Across the board pay increases have long-term fixed costs, yet fail to address existing pay disparities, or target mission critical retention and retention goals. The Administration therefore proposes a pay freeze for Federal civilian employees for 2019. This Administration believes in pay for performance,” one of the budget documents says.

It cites as an example the “within-grade” increases that, it said, “are limited, at regular intervals in the pay systems covering most federal workers. Employees must be performing acceptably to receive them, but those increases are paid “without re-

gard to whether they are performing at an exceptional level or merely passable (they are granted 99.7 percent of the time). The budget proposes to slow the frequency of these step increases, while increasing performance-based pay for workers in mission-critical areas.”

However, the budget does not go into detail on performance-based pay, nor on restricting employee appeal rights to address what it calls those who “are simply unable or unwilling to perform at acceptable levels.”

“The requirements to successfully remove an employee for misconduct or poor performance are onerous. Employees have a variety of avenues to appeal and challenge actions. . . . This is yet another area where the Federal workforce could benefit from adopting some private sector norms.” It says.

President Donald Trump had signaled that proposals were coming on both pay-for-performance and discipline in his State of the Union speech, when he called on Congress to give agencies “the authority to reward good workers—and to remove federal employees who do not deserve the public trust or fail the American people.”

The budget notes that civil service law was last overhauled 40 years ago and cites

independent studies that have decried it as outdated. “It is time to reconsider where that law has succeeded and where it has failed” in areas including what it called an overly “generous benefits package” compared with the private sector’s, the government’s hiring practices and employee union rights.

The plan repeats what it calls “compensation reforms” from last year’s proposal, some of which progressed in the House before falling by the wayside. Those include:

- Requiring employees under the Federal Employees Retirement System—more than nine-tenths of the workforce—to contribute more toward their retirement benefits. This would be phased in as one percentage point increases, resulting in a 6 percent of salary increase for most.

- Eliminating cost-of-living adjustments on the civil service annuities of those retired under FERS while reducing the adjustment by a half-percentage point for those retired under the older Civil Service Retirement System.

Reversing the pay system to put a greater emphasis on performance would require a major legislative effort, however, as would changing retirement benefits and civil service protections.

“Weakening our civil service system and attacking the pay and benefits of federal workers will backfire and leave our country unable to tackle the complex issues we are facing,” National Treasury Employees Union President Tony Reardon said in a statement.

In addition, for the first time, the White House proposed reducing the rate of interest the government pays in a government securities fund, called the G Fund, in the Thrift Savings Plan, a 401(k)-style program for federal employees and military personnel. That idea did feature in prior budget plans prepared by House Republicans that ultimately were not enacted.

“We oppose this proposal,” said Kim Weaver, spokeswoman for the TSP, which does not report to the White House. “Such a change would make the G Fund inadequate and ineffective from an investment standpoint for TSP participants who are saving for retirement,” she said in an email.

Another new proposal, although not presented in detail, is to combine the separate sick leave and vacation leave benefits for federal workers into one while creating a short-term disability insurance program.

Embrace of red ink a public reversal for GOP

By ANDREW TAYLOR
AND MARTIN CRUTSINGER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unveiled a \$4.4 trillion budget plan Monday that envisions steep cuts to America’s social safety net but mounting spending on the military.

ANALYSIS formally retreating from last year’s promises to balance the federal budget.

The president’s spending outline for the first time acknowledges that the Republican tax overhaul passed last year would add billions to the deficit and not “pay for itself” as Trump and his Republican allies asserted. If enacted as proposed, though no presidential budget ever is, the plan would establish an era of \$1 trillion-plus yearly deficits.

The open embrace of red ink is a remarkable public reversal for Trump and his party, which spent years objecting to President Barack Obama’s increased spending during the depths of the Great Recession. Rhetoric aside, however, Trump’s pattern is in line with his Republican brethren who have overseen spikes in deficits as they simultaneously increased military spending and cut taxes.

“We’re going to have the strongest military we’ve ever had, by far,” he said at the new Office of Defense Cooperation Monday. “In this budget we took care of the military like it’s never been taken care of before.”

Trump’s budget revived his calls for big cuts to domestic programs that include the poor and the Over-55 class, such as food stamps, housing subsidies and student loans. Retirement benefits would remain mostly untouched by Trump’s plan, as he has pledged, though Medicare providers would absorb about \$500 billion in cuts—a nearly 6 percent reduction. Some beneficiaries in

Social Security’s disability program would have to re-enter the workforce under proposed changes to disability rules.

While all presidents’ budgets are essentially dead on arrival — Congress writes and enacts its own spending legislation — Trump’s plan was dead before it landed.

It came just three days after the House and Senate passed a bipartisan agreement that set broad parameters for spending over the next two years. That deal, which includes large increases for domestic programs, rendered Monday’s Trump plan for 10-year, \$1.7 trillion cuts to domestic agencies such as the departments of Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development even more unrealistic.

The White House used Monday’s event to promote its long-awaited plan to support funding for infrastructure. The plan would put up \$200 billion in federal money over the next 10 years in hopes of leveraging a total of \$1.5 trillion in infrastructure spending, relying on state and local governments and the private sector to contribute the bulk of the funding.

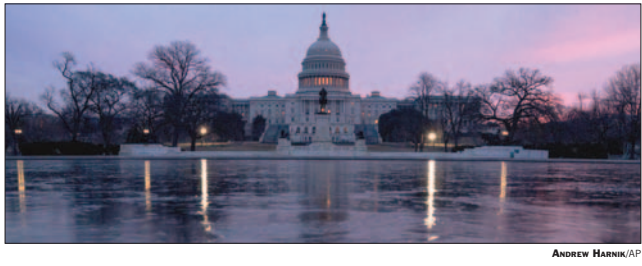
But after his aides talked up that plan over the weekend, Trump suggested that his infrastructure proposal wasn’t a big deal for him.

“If for any reason, they don’t want to support it, they that’s going to be up to them,” he said of the Republican-controlled Congress. “What was very important to me was the military; what was very important to me was the tax cuts.”

Trump also is proposing work requirements for several federal programs, including housing subsidies, food stamps and Medicaid. Such ideas have backing from powerful figures in Congress.

There was immediate opposition from Democrats.

“The Trump budget proposal makes clear his desire to enact



The Capitol Building is seen at sunrise Friday in Washington. President Donald Trump’s \$4.4 trillion budget plan calls for cuts to domestic programs and increased spending on the military.

massive cuts to health care, anti-poverty programs and investments in economic growth to blunt the deficit-exploding impact of his tax cuts for millionaires and corporations,” said Rep. John Yarmuth, of Kentucky, the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee.

Some Republicans, on the other hand, said spending was much too high.

“This budget continues too much of Washington’s wasteful spending — it does not balance in 10 years, and it creates a deficit of over a trillion dollars next year,” said Rep. Matt Gaetz, of Florida. “We cannot steal from America’s future to pay for spending today.”

Trump’s plan aims at other familiar targets. It would eliminate the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The administration wants NASA out of the International Space Station by 2025 and private businesses running the place instead.

But the domestic cuts would be far from enough to make up for the plummeting tax revenue projected in the budget.

Trump’s plan sees a 2019 deficit of \$984 billion, though White House Budget Director Mick Mulvaney admits \$1.2 trillion is more plausible after last week’s congress-

sional budget pact and \$90 billion worth of disaster aid is tacked on. That would be more than double the 2019 deficit the administration promised last year.

All told, the new budget sees accumulating deficits of \$7.2 trillion over the coming decade; Trump’s plan last year projected a 10-year shortfall of \$3.2 trillion. And that’s assuming Trump’s rosy economic predictions come true and Congress follows through — in an election year — with politically toxic cuts to social programs, farm subsidies and Medicare providers.

Last year Trump’s budget promise — such ideas could generate a small budget surplus by 2027; now, his best-case scenario is for a \$450 billion deficit that year, more than \$300 billion of which can be traced to his December tax cut.

In stark contrast, the budget revises the administration’s talking points for last year’s tax plan, which administration figures such as Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin promised would more than pay for itself.

“Not only will this tax plan pay for itself, but it will pay down debt,” Mnuchin declared in September.

Instead, Trump’s budget projects that tax revenues will plummet by \$3.7 trillion over the 2018-27 decade relative to last year’s “baseline” estimates. The budget also includes \$1.6 bil-

lion for the second stage of Trump’s proposed border wall, a 65-mile segment in Texas’ Rio Grande Valley. Trump’s request last year for 74 miles of wall in San Diego and the Rio Grande Valley is pending before lawmakers right now.

Once again, there’s no mention of how Mexico would have to pay for it, as Trump repeatedly promised. The plan reprises proposals to curb crop insurance costs, cut student loan subsidies and reduce pension benefits for federal workers. They went nowhere last year.

Trump’s plan promises 3 percent growth for the nation’s economy, continuing low inflation and low interest yields on U.S. Treasury bills despite a flood of new borrowing. That likely underestimates the mounting cost of financing the government’s \$20 trillion-plus debt, many economists say.

“This will meaningfully raise the odds that after juiced-up growth in 2018 and 2019, we will get a much weaker economy, possibly a recession in the next decade,” Zandi said. “In good times, budget policy should be working to get the deficits down because bad times are sure to come.”

ANDREW HARRIS/AP

NATION

Senate begins a difficult debate on immigration

BY ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate's top two leaders put on a show of camaraderie as their chamber launched its immigration debate, but also laid down markers underscoring how hard it will be to reach a deal that can move through Congress.

"We really do get along, despite what you read in the press," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Monday at a previously scheduled appearance alongside his counterpart, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., at the University of Louisville.

There was even ribbing when Schumer presented McConnell with a bottle of bourbon made in his home New York City borough of Brooklyn. McConnell, whose state knows a thing or two about bourbon, proclaimed, "There's no such thing as Brooklyn bourbon."

But just days after the two leaders brokered a bipartisan \$400 billion budget agreement and helped shepherd it into law, both men made clear that an immigration agreement will be tough.

"The time for political posturing is behind us," McConnell said later Monday on the Senate floor. He said while Democrats have called for "swift action" on immigration, "Now's the time to back up the talk with the hard work of finding a solution."

That, he pointedly said, would mean passage by the Senate and the House of a measure "which the president will sign."

McConnell expressed his support for a wide-ranging proposal by President Donald Trump that the Senate is expected to vote on this week. It would pave a path to citizenship for up to 1.8 million young "Dreamer" immigrants in the U.S. illegally, a lure for Democrats that many Republicans oppose.

Trump also wants \$25 billion for a border wall with Mexico and other security measures, as well as a curbs on legal immigration — a must for many Republicans. Many Democrats consider some of the proposals, including limiting the relatives that legal immigrants can bring to the U.S., to be nonstarters.

In remarks on the Senate floor, Schumer expressed opposition to such a sweeping approach.

"The only enemy here is overreach," Schumer said. "Now is not the time nor the place to reform the entire legal immigration system. Rather, this is the time for a narrow bill" — which Democrats have said would help the Dreamers and provide some money for border security.

Trump: Now or never on protections

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump warned Democrats on Tuesday that it's now or never when it comes to extending protections for young immigrants living in the country illegally.

Trump in an early morning tweet said Democrats and Republicans must act now to provide legal protections to young "Dreamer" immigrants even as legislation faces an uncertain prospect in Congress.

"Wouldn't it be great if we could finally, after so many years, solve the DACA puzzle," he wrote, adding: "This will be our last chance, there will never be another opportunity! March 5th."

Trump was referring to a deadline he announced last year to end a program protecting young immigrants from deportation. But a recent court ruling has rendered that deadline all but meaningless.

Trump planned to meet later Tuesday with the National Sheriffs' Association — a meeting where he was expected to continue his immigration pitch.

The comments came as the Senate voted 97-1 — Ted Cruz, R-Texas, provided the sole "no" vote — to plunge into an open-ended immigration debate that's been promised by McConnell. Both parties' leaders hope debate can be concluded this week, but it's unclear if that will happen or what the product, if any, will be.

"This is going to be done or not done this week," No. 2 Senate GOP leader John Cornyn, of Texas, told reporters.

Lawmakers' focus will be the Dreamers, hundreds of thousands of young immigrants who have lived in the U.S. illegally since being brought here as children. Trump's overall immigration plan, opposed by many Democrats, stands little chance of prevailing because any measure will need 60 votes. That means proposals will need substantial bipartisan support since the GOP majority is 51-49, and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has been absent in recent weeks battling cancer.



Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats told members of the Senate Intelligence Committee on Tuesday that he expects Russian interference in the 2018 midterm or state elections in the U.S.
ANDREW HARNIK/AP

US intel officials tell lawmakers Russia targeting 2018 midterm, state elections

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Three of the nation's top intelligence officials said Tuesday that the U.S. has seen Russian activity aimed at meddling in the upcoming midterm elections.

"We have seen Russian activity and intentions to have an impact on the next election cycle," CIA Director Mike Pompeo told the Senate Intelligence Committee.

National Intelligence Director Dan Coats and Adm. Mike Rogers, the head of the National Security Agency, agreed. They didn't describe the activity other than to say it was related to information warfare.

They told Congress that they would provide more details in a classified session later in the day. The intelligence officials said the information will be shared with

state and local governments and state election officials.

Russian interference in the upcoming elections is part of its pursuit of bolder cyberoperations and false information campaigns against America and its allies, according to a new intelligence report on global threats.

"This year's threat assessment also described the risk of conflict, especially with North Korea, as higher today than at any time since the end of the Cold War. So, too, is a rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia that is destabilizing the Middle East. The danger posed by weapons of mass destruction also is rising."

"In the next year, Russian intelligence and security services will continue to probe U.S. and allied critical infrastructures, as well as target the United States, NATO, and allies for insights into

U.S. policy," the report said.

"The 2018 U.S. midterm elections are a potential target for Russian influence operations."

"Russians stepped up their game with cyber, in particular, in 2016," Coats said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press.

His expectation: Russian interference in the midterm or in state elections.

"We think it's very likely because we don't see a letup in efforts to do this," Coats told the AP.

U.S. intelligence concluded Moscow interfered in the 2016 presidential election, which has led to the current FBI investigation into possible Trump campaign connections. Russia denies the allegations and President Donald Trump has called the FBI probe a witch hunt.

NATION

Trump: US costs in Middle East have been 'a mistake'

By ANNE GEARAN AND CAROL MORELLO
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump said Monday that U.S. aid expenditures in the Middle East were “a mistake,” both undercutting a round of complicated diplomacy in Arab capitals and underscoring his rising frustration at the dwindling chances of a Middle East peace deal.

The president also erroneously claimed that the United States has spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East over the past 17 years — a return to a frequent theme for Trump that U.S. generosity be repaid with results or support.

“As of a couple of months ago, we have spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East. Seven trillion dollars. What a mistake. But it is what it is,” Trump said at the White House as he introduced a domestic infrastructure spending plan.

“This will be a big week for Infrastructure,” Trump had tweeted earlier Monday. “After a stuporily spending \$7 trillion in the Middle East, it is now time to start investing in OUR Country!”

A day earlier, Trump had told a conservative Israeli newspaper that neither Israel nor the Palestinians may be committed to making peace.

“Right now, I would say the Palestinians are not looking to make peace; they are not looking to make peace. And I am not necessarily sure that Israel is looking to make peace,” Trump said in an interview with Israeli Hayom.

“I don’t know, frankly, if we are going to even have talks,” Trump said. “But I think it is very foolish for the Palestinians and I also think it would be very foolish for the Israelis if they don’t make a deal. It is our only opportunity and it will never happen after this.”

Many in the region expected that

Trump would present a proposal for talks early this year, but any announcement appears to be on hold. His Mideast envoys have never said when they plan to reveal their proposal, which is expected to ask Arab states, including Egypt and Gulf countries that are U.S. allies, to encourage Palestinians to make a deal.

That task was made harder by Trump’s declaration in December that the United States considers Jerusalem to be the Israeli capital.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who generally says little about the peace effort overseen by presidential son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner, is on a weeklong trip to the Middle East that does not include a stop in Israel.

Vice President Mike Pence visited Israel and neighboring states last month, but Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas refused to see him citing the Jerusalem announcement.

Trump’s designated negotiator, Jason Greenblatt, was in Israel and Jordan for a lengthy diplomatic trip last month, but like Pence he did not visit the West Bank or meet with high-level Palestinian officials. Kushner has not visited the region since before the Jerusalem announcement.

Trump’s \$7 trillion claim jumps together the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which together cost about \$1.8 trillion from 2001 to 2017, while also adding estimates of future spending such as interest on the debt and veterans’ care for the next three decades.

U.S. foreign aid in the Middle East and in Afghanistan is different from war spending, although Trump often seems to conflate them. He also does not appear to distinguish between war and reconstruction aid in Iraq, which is in the Middle East, from Afghanistan, which is in Central Asia.



Students at the Berkeley Carroll School in the Brooklyn borough of New York use virtual reality headsets in their classroom Feb. 7. Seated from left are Daniel Cornicello, Charlie Hertz and Taylor Engler. At the table in the back of the room is Angela Agüero.

Students’ learning is enhanced by use of virtual reality in classroom

By DREEPTI HAJELA AND CAROLYN THOMPSON
Associated Press

NEW YORK — On a February afternoon in a Brooklyn classroom, Taylor Engler, 16, came face to face with a cow. But it was all in her head.

A virtual reality headset had transported the Berkeley Carroll School junior and eight classmates to an upstate New York farm 250 miles away. For students, the technology means field trips are no longer limited by the length of a bus ride.

“I was not expecting it to be right in my face!” Taylor said after peeling off the purple headset and finding herself back in the confines of her city classroom.

On any given day, students nationwide are deep-sea diving, observing medical operations, even swimming through the human circulatory system using gadgets that are becoming increasingly accessible in both cost and content.

“On any given day, students nationwide are deep-sea diving, observing medical operations, even swimming through the human circulatory system using gadgets that are becoming increasingly accessible in both cost and content. It’s another way to engage the iPhone generation of students. At best, it can enhance their understanding and improve their grades.

Engler and classmates virtually walked through barns and fields in Watkins Glen. It was an “outing” that otherwise would not have happened, adviser Lily Adler said, given the constraints of time and staffing.

“It’s different than watching video because you can have more than one perspective; you can actually move,” Engler said during the lesson by animal rights group Farm Sanctuary.

Not only move, but also feel, said Richard Lamb, who at the University at Buffalo Neurocognition Science Lab studies how the brain processes information. In the lab, the physical effects of virtual reality become clear as subjects standing on solid ground teeter on stories-high virtual scaffolding or experience motion sickness without moving.

“Some of the research we’re doing has actually shown that what you experience in virtual reality has very similar, if not the same, physiological responses that you would get if you were doing the actual activity,” Lamb said.

The effect on learning, he said, is to improve interest, understanding and recall.

It’s unknown how many classrooms have or will adopt the technology, but experts say it’s still relatively rare. While individual headsets that require a user’s phone can cost as little as \$20 or \$30, systems and software for classes run into the thousands of dollars. Early complaints about a lack of good software are fading as more companies enter the market, but the rules for use haven’t necessarily caught up to the technology.

In New York, for example, simulated lab experiments don’t count toward the state’s hands-on lab time requirements.

Even so, experts say, the sciences are an area where virtual reality holds particular promise for classrooms.

“The biggest hindrance, I think, is going to be the quality of that experience, how closely it mimics the physical world,” said David Evans, executive director of the National Science Teachers Association.

But, he said, “The ability to do dangerous things, the ability to run many, many more cases in a simulation space as opposed to the real physical space represents a huge learning opportunity.”

Feds: Military impersonator used helo to impress woman

By JONATHAN DREW
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A man pretending to be a three-star U.S. Army general wanted to impress a woman when he unexpectedly landed in a chartered helicopter at the headquarters of a North Carolina technology company last year, a federal agent testified Monday.

Details about the strange case of Christian Desgroux emerged at a hearing before a federal magistrate, who ordered that the defendant remain in jail pending his upcoming arraignment. The 57-year-old is charged with pretending to be a military officer, which carries a maximum of three years in prison.

It was around sunset on Nov. 6 when the pilot of the helicopter chartered by



Desgroux

tenant general, Homeland Security Special Agent Tony Bell testified.

“He saluted the security officers, and they actually saluted him back,” Bell said.

A suspicious security supervisor confronted Desgroux, who told him he was there to pick up a female employee to take

her to Fort Bragg for a classified briefing that had been authorized by President Donald Trump.

But none of it was true: Desgroux later acknowledged to federal agents that he had never served in the U.S. military, Bell said.

The woman, a longtime acquaintance of Desgroux, expected him to arrive in a car for a visit. Instead they went on a 30-minute helicopter ride around Raleigh, Bell said.

She and the pilot, who has not been charged, appear to have been swept up in Desgroux’s strange behavior.

“She didn’t know what to make of it,” Bell told the judge. “She just went along with it.”

Bell testified that investigators suspect Desgroux is mentally ill, but didn’t

elaborate. Federal Magistrate Judge Robert T. Numbers noted that while the impersonation charge carries a relatively low maximum sentence for a federal criminal case, the circumstances warrant continued detention for Desgroux.

“The defendant has engaged in substantial dishonesty,” Numbers said, noting that a number of unrelated state criminal charges are also pending against him.

Desgroux faces state charges including misdemeanor assault on his stepdaughter and violating a protective order taken out by an estranged wife, Bell said.

Defense attorney Andrew McCoppin said that before those charges in the past year, the most trouble his client had been in amounted to traffic violations.

NATION

Can gene therapy be harnessed to resist HIV?

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE**
Associated Press

For more than a decade, the strongest AIDS drugs could not fully control Matt Chappell's HIV infection. Now, his body controls it by itself, and researchers are trying to perfect the gene editing that made that possible.

Scientists removed some of his blood cells, disabled a gene to help them resist HIV and returned those "edited" cells to him in 2014. So far, it has given the San Francisco man the next best thing to a cure.

"I've been off medications for three and a half years," he said. He even was able to keep the virus in check despite cancer treatments last year that taxed his immune system.

Chappell was lucky, though. Only a few of the 100 others in those experiments were able to stay off HIV drugs for a couple of years; the rest still need medications to help suppress the virus.

Now, researchers think they can improve the treatment and are trying again to tackle HIV by doctoring DNA. New studies to test these tweaked approaches in

people are getting underway. "Gene therapy techniques have advanced greatly," said Dr. Otto Yang, of the UCLA AIDS Institute, one place working on this. "A lot of people are thinking it's the right time to go back."

They include Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which is funding some of the new studies. He doesn't think the technique will become common because millions of people do well on existing treatments. But he says it could help those who can't easily control the virus, and it should be pursued because it holds potential for a cure.

"They're very bold, innovative techniques, mostly to try and cure people," he said. "It's worth trying because the science is there." Only one person is known to have been cured of HIV infection, a man who had a cell transplant a decade ago from a donor with natural immunity to the virus. The donor lacked a common gene that makes an entryway that HIV uses to infect T cells, immune system soldiers in the blood.

The transplant gave the recipient that protection, but proce-



Matt Chappell, right, is checked last month by Dr. Christopher Schiessl during an appointment at a medical center in San Francisco.

JEFF CHU/AP

dures like that are too risky and impractical for wide use. Scientists have been trying to find a way to create similar immunity by altering some of a patient's own cells.

They use a gene-editing tool called zinc finger nucleases, which cut DNA at a precise spot to

disable the HIV entryway gene.

The California company that makes the editing tool, Sangamo Therapeutics, sponsored the initial studies.

"It worked. The T cells were edited," said Sangamo President Dr. Sandy Macrae. But it didn't work quite well enough: The al-

tered T cells were outnumbered by T cells that were not altered and could still be infected.

Now, Dr. John Zaia at City of Hope, a research center in Duarte, Calif., is trying the approach with a twist. He's using blood stem cells — parent cells that produce many others. Once a stem cell is altered, the benefit should multiply and last longer, Zaia said.

Though the initial gene-editing experiments were disappointing, there was a silver lining. Patients in those studies had a big drop in the number of cells where HIV lurked in a dormant state — the so-called reservoir of silent disease.

At Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Dr. Rafick-Pierre Sekaly is trying to capitalize on that drop. His study will try the same gene editing — disabling the gene that makes the HIV entryway — while keeping patients on strong antiviral medicines for at least a year before discontinuing them.

"As long as we're not able to get rid of this reservoir, we'll never be able to stop treatment," he explained.

Bill, Melinda Gates rethink philanthropic work in US

By **SALLY HO**
Associated Press

KIRKLAND, Wash. — Bill and Melinda Gates, as the world's top philanthropists, are rethinking their work in America as they confront what they consider their satisfactory track record on schools, the country's growing inequity and a president they disagree with more than any other.

In an interview with The Associated Press, the couple said they're concerned about President Donald Trump's "America first" worldview. They've made known their differences with the president and his party on issues including foreign aid, taxes and protections for immigrant youth in the country illegally.

Also, they said they're now digging into the layers of U.S. poverty that they haven't been deeply involved with at the national level, including employment, race, housing, mental health, incarceration and substance abuse.

"We are not seeing the mobility out of poverty in the same way in the United States as it used to exist," Melinda Gates said.

is studying those topics with no plans yet for any particular initiatives, though it has done related work at home in Washington state on a much smaller scale. Last year, it funded a grant for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities to look into state and federal policies that can reduce poverty.

“We are not seeing the mobility out of poverty in the same way in the United States as it used to exist.”

Melinda Gates

which they discussed innovation in education, energy and health — including vaccines, which Trump has voiced skepticism about.

"I got, both times, to talk about the miracle of vaccines and how those are good



TED S. WARREN/AP

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, take part in a Feb. 1 interview with The Associated Press in Kirkland, Wash.

things," Bill Gates said.

Melinda Gates, who left her job at Microsoft to raise their three children before turning to the foundation full time, has lately embraced her role as a public figure more boldly. She called out Trump's behavior, saying the president has a responsibility to be a good role model when he speaks and tweets, and that his verbal attacks don't belong in the public discourse.

"You just have to go look in Twitter to see the disparaging comments over and

over and over again about women and minorities," Melinda Gates said. "That's just not what I believe. It's not the world that I see."

Since 2000, the Seattle-based private foundation has amassed an endowment worth over \$40 billion, which includes a large portion of billionaire investor Warren Buffett's fortune. The Gates Foundation has given money to various programs in more than 100 countries, as well as in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

14 worms pulled from eye of woman with rare human infection

By **MIKE STOBBE**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — An Oregon woman, 26, who had worms coming out of her eye is being called the first known human case of a parasitic infection spread by flies.

Fourteen tiny worms were removed from the left eye of the

woman in August 2016. Scientists reported the case Monday.

The woman, Abby Beckley, was diagnosed in August 2016 with Thelazia gulosa. That's a type of eye worm seen in cattle in the northwestern United States and southern Canada but never before in humans.

They are spread by a type of fly

known as "face flies." The flies feed on the tears that lubricate the eyeball, scientists said.

She had been horseback riding and fishing in Gold Beach, Ore., a coastal, cattle-farming area.

After a week of eye irritation, Beckley pulled a worm from her eye. She visited doctors but removed most of the additional

worms herself during the following few weeks. The worms were translucent and each less than a half-inch long.

After they were removed, no more worms were found and she had no additional symptoms.

Eye worms are seen in several kinds of animals, including cats and dogs. They can be spread by different kinds of flies.

Two other types of Thelazia eye worm infections had been seen in people before, but never this kind, according to Richard Bradbury, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He was the study's lead author.

The report was published in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

NATION

2 in Baltimore's elite detective unit convicted

By DAVID MCFADDEN
Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Baltimore's latest police corruption saga could be tough to sell as a TV crime drama, short on heroes and too extreme to attract loyal viewers.

Detectives in an elite unit praised for taking guns off the streets secretly dedicated themselves to shaking down citizens and hunting for "monsters" — big-time drug dealers

with loot to rob. Their leader, a sergeant with a golden-boy reputation and a sledgehammer approach to policing, kept actual sledgehammers — along with grappling hooks, black masks, even a machete — in duffel bags in his police-issued car.



Hersi

Crossing the line from law enforcers to lawbreakers, members of the Gun Trace Task Force had become thugs with badges, stealing cash, reselling seized narcotics, sticking illegal GPS trackers on the cars of their robbery targets and lying under oath to cover their tracks.

Task force members who pleaded guilty months ago hoping to shave time off their sentences revealed those and other jaw-dropping details as two of their colleagues insisted on going to trial. The result: A jury convicted Detectives Daniel Hersh and Marcus Taylor of robbery, racketeering, and conspiracy Monday evening, and they face up to 20

years on each count.

Even in a city all too familiar with abuses by law enforcers, the fallout from these stories of police criminality has been bad so far and the scandal promises to get a whole lot worse for Baltimore's fragile criminal justice system.

Revealing police criminality stretching back to 2008, the four ex-detectives told jurors about everything from armed home invasions to staging fictitious crime scenes and routinely defrauding their department.

They testified that their supervisor, Sgt. Wayne Jenkins, an amateur mixed-martial-arts fighter, told them to carry BB guns in case they needed to plant weapons, conspired with a crooked bail bondsman and occasionally posed as a federal agent when shaking people down.

Two of the detectives, Momodu Gondo and Jennell Raymond, admitted to leading double lives as police officers and armed drug dealers, even running interference for a heroin-trafficking ring run by Gondo's childhood buddy.

Public defenders are calling into question each and every case touched by the disbanded unit's officers, several thousand of them over the last decade. Currently, roughly 125 tainted cases involving the eight indicted Baltimore law enforcers have been dropped.

"Beyond the sheer credibility issues that should have been raised at the time, given how embedded their crimes were in their police work, all cases involving these officers are tainted," said Robbie Katz, head of special litigation for Baltimore's Office of the Public Defender.



AP

A man shovels snow to clear a driveway near 5Pointz, a graffiti art gallery, in New York, in January 2011. A judge awarded \$6.7 million to graffiti artists whose spray paintings were destroyed.

Judge awards \$6.7M to artists whose graffiti was destroyed

By LARRY NEUMEISTER
AND KAREN MATTHEWS
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A judge awarded \$6.7 million Monday to graffiti artists who sued after dozens of spray paintings were destroyed on the walls of dilapidated warehouse buildings torn down to make room for high-rise luxury residences.

U.S. District Judge Frederic Block in Brooklyn said 45 of the 49 paintings were recognized works of art "wrongfully and willfully destroyed" by a landlord.

Twenty-one aerosol artists had sued the owner of a Long Island City, Queens, site known as 5Pointz under the Visual Rights Act, a 1990 federal law that protects artists' rights even if someone else owns the physical artwork. Their graffiti was painted over in 2013, and the buildings were torn down a year later.

Before they vanished, the graffiti artworks became a tourist attraction, drawing thousands of spectators daily and forming a backdrop to the 2013 movie,

"Now You See Me," and a site for an Usher tour, the judge noted.

All the while, the crime-ridden neighborhood gradually improved and it became the "world's largest collection of quality outdoor aerosol art," though a system set up by the artists meant some paintings were temporary while others were given permanent status, Block wrote.

The ruling followed a three-week trial in November, when Block said the "respectful, articulate and credible" artists testified about "striking technical and artistic mastery and vision worthy of display in prominent museums if not on the walls of 5Pointz."

He noted one artist came from London, another from rural West Virginia, while others were products of prestigious art schools. Some were self-taught.

He said he was impressed with the breadth of the artists' works and how many works "spoke to the social issues of our times."

Jerry Wolkoff, who owned the buildings, had conceded he allowed the spray-paint artists to

use the buildings as a canvas for decades but said they always knew they would be torn down someday. His lawyer, David Ebert, did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

The artists had once hoped to buy the properties before their value soared to over \$200 million.

Block said he hoped the award would give teeth to a federal law that should have kept Wolkoff from demolishing them for at least 10 months when he had all his permits.

Artists then could have easily rescued some paintings from siding, plywood or sheet-rock before the rollers, spray machines and buckets of white paint arrived.

"Wolkoff has been singularly unrepentant," Block said. "He was given multiple opportunities to admit the whitewashing was a mistake, show remorse or suggest he would do things differently if he had another chance."

"Wolkoff could care less. As he caustically testified," the judge said.

Bid to name park for Nancy Reagan met with opposition

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — In one of Virginia's most liberal jurisdictions, political leaders are just saying "no" to a proposal in Congress to name a popular park for former first lady Nancy Reagan.

Legislation passed a House committee last month to rename Gravelly Point Park, which sits on federal land adjacent to Ronald Reagan National Airport. The bill's sponsor, Georgia Republican Jody Hice, said renaming the park for the former first lady — who is commonly associated with the "Just Say No" drugs campaign — "would be a fitting tribute" given its proximity to the airport that

bears her husband's name.

The proposal is not supported by political leaders in Arlington County, a suburb of the nation's capital, where the park is located.

"It's not an absolute blanket opposition to Nancy Reagan," said Rep. Don Beyer, D-Va., who represents Arlington in Congress. "I object to a member of Congress from Georgia trying to name a park in somebody else's district."

The park, which sits on the Potomac River next to George Washington Memorial Parkway, is best known for the impressive views it affords of the airport's landings and takeoffs. Jets roar overhead to the delight of families, and pho-



Reagan

tographers are invariably drawn to the park.

Kate Cristol, who chairs the Arlington County Board, said the debate over the park name has not generated a huge amount of discussion among Arlingtonians. But she said she and others object to the new name and to the process by which it has occurred.

"We would never act as a local legislative body without a whole

lot of public input," she said.

"Gravelly Point already has a name. It's featured in the commonwealth's tourism promotions," she said. "It's really a gem for our community. Kids become totally entranced" when they see the planes come in.

Grover Norquist, a conservative activist who also heads up the Ronald Reagan Legacy Project that encourages opportunities to name parks, bridges and mountains for the Reagans, said he supports the plan.

Beyer said he believes Norquist is the driving force behind the legislation and Republicans are trying to sneak the new name

through Congress. He said he did not know about the legislation until the day before it appeared in front of his committee.

The National Park Service, which operates the park, has not taken a position on the proposal. In November 2016, though, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission reviewed an administrative request to change the name.

The commission's chairman, Peter May, wrote that "none of the Commissioners felt it was appropriate to authorize a memorial to the former first lady at this time, and without a more complex evaluation of alternatives."

NATION



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Pasco County Commission candidates Kelly Smith, left, and Brandi Geoit prepare forms for their Galentine's Day meeting Monday in Lutz, Fla. Galentine's Day, celebrated Feb. 13, is a day to celebrate women's friendships and activism.

Galentine's celebration adds activism to menu

By TAMARA LUSH
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — When Kelly Smith thought about when to hold her kickoff event for a county commission campaign in suburban Florida, she chose a day symbolizing women supporting women: Galentine's Day.

The unofficial holiday began as an idea on a popular sitcom. But this year, many women like Smith are turning it into part of the #MeToo movement.

Galentine's Day is about celebrating women working together, and that's how we're going to win," said Smith, who lives in Pasco County on the state's west coast.

A candidate for another county seat, Brandi Geoit, is planning to attend. She thinks it's important for women to support other women — in part because of some of the inappropriate comments she's received from men while campaigning.

"Guys asking me for hand massages and sending me pictures of their junk," she sighed. "We're basically saying that this is our holiday, this is important that a lot of women are standing up and saying that enough is enough."

Celebrated the day before Valentine's Day, Galentine's Day was first introduced on the television show "Parks and Recreation." Amy Poehler, playing the character Leslie Knope, declared, "Every Feb. 13, my ladyfriends and I leave our husbands and our boyfriends at home, and we just come and kick it, break-fast-style. Ladies celebrating ladies. It's like Lilith Fair, minus the angst. Plus frrittatas."

It became a cultural movement of sorts — like Festivus, but with better food and less aggression. In recent years, women have marked the day with leisurely brunches, giving each other books or throwing parties.

This year, women across the country were celebrating with more than just mimosas and Instagram-worthy gifts. It's a natural extension of the #MeToo movement for those marking a

day of activism, politics and female solidarity.

Sara Becker, of Brooklyn, N.Y., formed a group called Nasty Galentines after President Donald Trump's election in 2016. Last Galentine's Day, she hosted a craft party where several dozen people wrote Valentine's Day cards to Congress. This year, she and friend Alissa Lentz were holding a networking party that they described on invitations as "protesting with love."

Their event Tuesday night was to include a panel of women discussing how they are overcoming the challenges of the past year in light of the #MeToo movement.

"We wanted to turn it beyond just a crafting party into a conversation," Lentz said. "We wanted female entrepreneurs to reflect on the last year, but also guide us as to how can we turn this into action and change and policy. Let's learn from one another."

In Columbia, S.C., the Women's Rights and Empowerment Network and Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands held a Galentine's-themed happy hour Monday evening. Guests were encouraged to write South Carolina's female legislators with concerns or gratitude.

"In light of recent events in both our state and on the national stage, we felt it was important to celebrate the strength of those women coming forward to tell their story of assault and the strength of the support system female friendships can provide as women stand up and speak up together," said Lara Winburn, director of development for WREN.

Others are marking the day privately. Antoinette Kerr, of Lexington, N.C., was writing poems and letters to her friends on Galentine's Day cards. She's also encouraging people to donate to groups that help women.

Kerr, who is on the board of the Raleigh, N.C.-based nonprofit group Women AdvAaNCe, said female friendship and activism empower women collectively. "We're not alone," she said.

Pot's 4/20 holiday tied to rise in fatal car accidents

By LINDSEY TANNER
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Marijuana users' self-proclaimed holiday is linked with a slight increase in fatal U.S. car crashes, an analysis of 25 years of data found.

The study lacks evidence on whether pot was involved in any of the April 20 crashes, but marijuana can impair driving ability. Previous studies have shown that many pot-using motorists drive after partaking and think it's safe to do so.

The researchers analyzed U.S. government data on fatal traffic accidents from 1992 — shortly after 4/20 was popularized as a pot holiday in High Times magazine — through 2016. They compared driver deaths on that date with deaths on a day the week before and the week after during the study period.

Deaths increased slightly in most but not all states, amounting to an overall increased risk of 12 percent — or an extra 142 driver deaths linked with the holiday, said lead author Dr. John Staples at the University of British Columbia.

Other studies have found a similarly elevated risk linked with alcohol and driving on Super Bowl Sunday and New Year's Eve.

Most accidents had no police data on drug testing so there's no way to confirm that marijuana was involved, but researchers think the drug was responsible for some crashes.

The study was published Monday in JAMA Internal Medicine.

"It's a really relevant question to be thinking about now since legalization seems to be progressing across the United States and in Canada," Staples

said.

Marijuana is legal for medical use in most U.S. states and in Canada; recreational use has been legalized in nine states plus Washington, D.C., and is expected to become legal in Canada in July.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, marijuana can impair driving ability. However, the U.S. agency also notes that directly linking marijuana with car crashes can be difficult because it's often used while drinking alcohol.

An earlier survey of college freshmen found that driving after marijuana use and riding with someone using pot was common, especially among young men, and more common than alcohol-linked driving. And a 2014 study in six states found that marijuana was increasingly detected in drivers killed in car crashes during a 10-year period.

It's a recognized risk in Colorado, where voters approved legalizing it in 2012. Last year the state's transportation department partnered with Lyft and a pot industry group to offer discounted rides for pot users partaking in 4/20 festivities. The program runs through April this year. Data show that 15 percent of DUI arrests in Colorado last year involved marijuana, and a 2016 survey found about half of users in the state think driving under the influence of pot is safe.

Dr. Andrew Monte, an emergency medicine physician and toxicology expert at the University of Colorado, said the study offers an important message.

"We think about cannabis as being ubiquitous in our society," he said. "However we need to realize that people should not be using this and driving."

Obamas unveil museum portraits

By ASHRAF KHALIL
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When Barack Obama speaks, people listen. At least that's what he was in the White House. But that kind of authority didn't hold much sway when it came time for his presidential portrait.

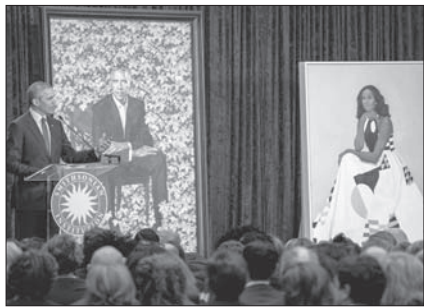
At a ceremony Monday to unveil portraits of him and former first lady Michelle Obama, the former president said artist Kehinde Wiley cheerfully ignored almost all of his suggestions.

"He listened very thoughtfully to what I had to say before doing exactly what he always intended to do," he said. "I tried to negotiate less gray hair, but Kehinde's artistic integrity would not allow it. I tried to negotiate smaller ears and struck out on that as well."

The final product depicts Obama sitting in a straight-backed chair, leaning forward and looking serious while surrounded by greenery and flowers. Michelle Obama's portrait, painted by Amy Sutherland, shows her in a black and white dress looking thoughtful with her hand on her chin.

Both artists were personally chosen by the Obamas.

The portraits will now hang in the National Portrait Gallery, which is part of the Smithsonian group of museums. The gallery has a complete collection of presidential portraits. A different set of portraits of the former first couple will eventually hang in the



ANDREW HARRIN/AP

Former President Barack Obama, left, speaks at the unveiling ceremony for the Obamas' official portraits at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington on Monday.

White House.

"I am humbled, I am honored, I am proud," Michelle Obama said. "Young people, particularly girls and girls of color, in future years they will come to this place and see someone who looks like them hanging on the walls of this incredible institution."

The former president drew multiple laughs from the audience for his remarks, starting out by praising Sutherland for capturing, "the grace and beauty and charm and hotness of the woman that I love."

Wiley said the depiction of Obama surrounded by greenery and flowers was meant to "chart his path on earth" through the choice of flowers. The painting includes chrysanthemums, which are the official flower of Chicago; jasmine to evoke Hawaii, where Obama largely grew up; and African blue lilies to honor Obama's Kenyan father.

"Being the first African-American painter to paint the first African-American president, it doesn't get any better than that," he said.

WORLD



SILVIA IZQUIERDO/AP

Samba style in Rio

Performers from the Uniao da Ilha samba school parade during Carnival celebrations Tuesday at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Duterte slammed over comment on shooting at female rebels' genitals

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Human rights groups condemned the Philippine president on Tuesday for saying that troops should shoot female communist rebel women in the genitals to render them “useless,” which they said could encourage sexual violence and war crimes.



Duterte

The left-wing group Karapatan said President Rodrigo Duterte “has distinguished himself as a frothing-in-the-mouth fascist who incites the worst violations of international humanitarian law.”

Duterte’s remarks “are but the latest of the series of this madman’s display of tyranny, lunacy and machismo,” Karapatan Secretary General Cristina Palabay said.

The U.S.-based group Human Rights Watch said the remark last week was the latest in a “series of misogynist, derogatory and demeaning statements he has made about women” that encourage state forces to commit sexual violence during armed conflicts.

In a rambling speech before surrendered communist rebels, Duterte spoke about the futility of their decades-old insurgency and how his administration can help them return to normal life.

Duterte asked why women join the insurgency and abandon their families. At one point, he said without elaborating: “Tell the soldiers. There’s a new order coming from the mayor. We won’t kill you. We will just shoot your vagina so that ... if there is no vagina, it would be useless.”

The remarks elicited laughter from the audience.

An official transcript of the president’s speech issued by the government omitted the word “vagina” and expletives from his remarks.

A longtime mayor of southern Davao city, where he built a reputation for his extra-tough approach to criminality and his brash, often sex-laden remarks, Duterte has acknowledged his rough ways but suggested many Filipinos have come to accept him.

Western governments and human rights watchdogs have expressed alarm over his crackdown on illegal drugs, which has left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead. He has lashed out at critics, including European governments, which he told Monday “to go to hell” for imposing conditions on financial aid. Duterte said he has told European officials he won’t attend an upcoming meeting between Southeast Asian and European leaders.

“They say that I have a bad mouth. It’s true. They say that I’m not a statesman, not fit for a president, and that’s true,” Duterte said in a speech Monday, referring to his critics. “But the problem here is that I won’t.”

Turkey warns Greece, Cyprus over gas drilling

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan issued a warning Tuesday to neighboring Greece, Cyprus and international companies exploring for gas in the eastern Mediterranean not to “step out of line” and encroach on Turkey’s rights.

Meanwhile, Greek authorities said a Turkish coast guard vessel rammed a Greek coast guard boat off a couple of uninhabited islets in the Aegean Sea over the two NATO allies nearly went to war in 1996. There were no injuries.



Erdogan

Erdogan made the warning in an address to legislators of his ruling party as Turkish warships continued to impede a rig from reaching a location in Cyprus where Italian energy company Eni is scheduled to drill for gas.

“We recommend that foreign companies don’t allow themselves to be an instrument of issues that surpass their limits and strength, by trusting the Greek Cypriot side,” he said. “Their show of strength lasts only until they see our ships and our planes.”

Turkey opposes the drilling, which it says disregards the rights of breakaway Turkish Cypriots. It also claims as its own part of the area Cypriots designated for exploratory drilling.

The Cypriot government says it has a sovereign right to drill, and that if the search is successful, any income would be shared equitably if the island is reunified.

Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades refrained from direct comment on Erdogan’s statements, but said Turkish naval activity

should cause no public alarm. “There’s no reason for anyone to worry,” he told reporters in Nicosia. “Actions are being taken in such a way so as to avert any kind of crisis.”

The European Union on Monday cautioned Turkey to respect the territory of its member states and to avoid ratcheting up tensions. Cyprus has been divided since Turkey invaded in 1974 after a failed coup by supporters of an union with Greece. The island joined the EU in 2004, but only the southern part enjoys full membership benefits.

Many in Turkey also dispute Greek ownership of uninhabited Aegean islets near Turkey’s coastline. The two countries have a long history of rivalry, and have thrice come close to war over Aegean rights and Cyprus since 1974.

“Opportunistic attempts concerning gas exploration off Cyprus and concerning Aegean islets are not escaping our attentions,” Erdogan said.

Greece’s coast guard said nobody was injured in the collision around midnight Monday, although the Greek vessel suffered damage to the stern where the Turkish boat hit it with its bows. A coast guard statement said the Turkish vessel was conducting “dangerous maneuvers” and struck the Greek vessel inside Greek waters.

The coast guard vessels were east of the uninhabited Imia — Kardak in Turkish — islets, which both countries claim and are prime fishing spots, attracting fishing boats from both countries.

Greek government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos voiced concern but appealed for restraint.

“Right now there is no need to pour more oil on the flames. What is needed is calm, level-headedness and a serious handling of the situation,” he said. “Recently we have been seeing increasingly provocative behavior from Turkey, which is a source of very serious concern to us,” he told private Alpha radio.

South African ruling party says discredited president must leave office

By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — South African President Jacob Zuma must leave office promptly so the country can move toward political stability and economic recovery, the ruling party said Tuesday, finally disowning a leader who has been discredited by corruption scandals.

The national executive committee of the African National Congress decided to “recall” Zuma at a marathon meeting that ended overnight, said Ace Magashule, the party’s secretary-general.

Zuma had agreed to resign and wanted to stay in office for several more months,

but Magashule said the party committee rejected that proposal because it wanted to deal speedily with the uncertainty over the leadership turmoil in one of Africa’s largest economies.

The ANC looks forward to an “amicable solution” and “it’s obvious” that the party wants Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa to succeed Zuma, Magashule said.

He added that he expects Zuma to respond on Wednesday to the ruling party’s decision.

“I don’t know what will happen, but let’s leave it to President Jacob Zuma,” Magashule said.

If Zuma refuses his party’s instruction, the matter could go to parliament for a vote on a motion of no confidence that could bolster the

political opposition’s standing as a key engine of the president’s downfall.

An opposition-backed motion of no confidence has been scheduled for Feb. 22, but its sponsors want the vote to be moved up to this week. Zuma has survived similar motions in the past, but many ruling party members now see him as a political liability ahead of 2019 elections and likely would vote against him.

The lack of a resolution to the country’s political limbo in the past week had indicated that the president was rejecting the demands of many former supporters that he step down immediately.

The impasse highlighted the disarray within the party that was the main move-

ment against white minority rule and has led South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994. The ANC once commanded moral stature as the party of Nelson Mandela, but corruption scandals linked to Zuma, who denies wrongdoing, have cut into its popularity.

Ramaphosa, Zuma’s expected successor and elected ANC’s new leader in December, had held private talks with the president on a power transition, angering opposition parties who described the process as an affront to South African democracy.

Zuma, who took office in 2009 and is in his second five-year term, had asked for state security for his family and payment of legal fees, said South African media, citing unidentified ANC sources.

EUROPE



Tourists walk after sunset early this month in an igloo village in San Simone di Vallevé, near Bergamo, northern Italy.

Photos by Luca Bruno/AP

Where ice warms hearts

To lure tourists, struggling Italian Alps village creates hamlet of igloos built by migrants

By CHARLENE PELE
Associated Press

SAN SIMONE DI VALLEVE, Italy, an Alpine village in the Italian Alps, once had a thriving ski trade. But financial issues kept the lifts closed this winter. The local hotel now houses about 80 African asylum-seekers who were assigned to live there when they arrived in Italy.

But restaurant owner Davide Midali saw promise in both his village and its new residents. To lure tourists back, he set out to build igloos that could be rented overnight, like ones he had seen in Sweden. That's how a handful of immigrants unaccustomed to the cold picked up the art of igloo-making.

"When some of them saw me creating these blocks of snow, they voluntarily decided to give a hand to reach a common goal," Midali said.

Working with a small crew of volunteers,

‘It’s not about me being from Africa and him from Europe. We are all from one race.’

Omar Kanteh

Gambian who helps build the igloos

Midali built six igloos, each taking four or five days to complete. Omar Kanteh, a Gambian citizen who has been in Italy for nine months, is among the newcomers who embraced the construction project, as well as its friendly foreman.

"God made snow, but this time, man made igloos," Kanteh said. "It was very strange to me, so I am very excited. This is a new talent in my life."

The igloos, which were set up as a mini-village, sleep 18 altogether and have been fully booked on weekends since mid-January. Curious people stop by to snap photo-

graphs or for a peek inside the snow domes. Schools in Milan and Bergamo have brought children up for field trips.

For \$123, per person, a couple can dine at Midali's restaurant, sleep in an igloo and eat an organic breakfast before embarking on a guided snowshoe excursion in the Valle Brembana mountains.

Midali thinks the project has allowed him and the migrants to understand each other a little better, maybe even to serve as an example for others in San Simone.

In that way, the connection forged with tools and snow is a small counterpart to

the pre-election campaigning in Italy that has featured right-wing parties pledging to expel thousands of migrants.

"You learn to know these young men, where they are from and their background, and they also learn about our background and life here," Midali said.

Praising Midali's courage and open-mindedness, Kanteh said he would like to settle in San Simone if his application for Italian asylum is approved.

"He loves me for who I am, and I also love him for who he is," he said. "It's not about me being from Africa and him from Europe. We are all from one race."

Cristian Palazzi, president of the local tourism board, said the igloo undertaking project was "a small step to give life to a small community."

"I cannot guarantee whether this is enough, but for sure this has been a great idea because without it, today San Simone would be dead," he said.



From left: Moussa Sissoko, left, of Mali, helps build an igloo with hamlet owner Davide Midali; tourists take a selfie; and Omar Kanteh, of Gambia, lights a candle after sunset.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Server posts that church didn't tip and gets fired

FL PALM BEACH GARDENS — A 25-year-old server at a Florida restaurant said she lost her job after posting on Facebook that she didn't get tipped for a \$735 take-out order placed by a local church.

Tamlynn Yoder told the Palm Beach Post that she took to social media after Christ Fellowship church placed a 75-item order from Outback Steakhouse in Palm Beach Gardens.

Yoder said that because she spent much of her shift preparing the order, she only made \$18 in total tips that day.

When she went to work the next day, she was fired.

Wedding dress returned 32 years after mix-up

OH WILLOWICK — An Ohio woman was reunited with her wedding dress 32 years after a dry cleaner mix-up. Ame Bartlebaugh said she went looking for her mother's wedding dress at her grandmother's house in Willowick on Feb. 4. The 25-year-old is getting married in December 2019.

Bartlebaugh opened the box expecting a simple, sleeveless dress. She instead found a lacy, tiered dress. The wrong dress had been in her grandmother's attic since it left a now-defunct dry cleaner in 1985.

Bartlebaugh posted about the mix-up on Facebook, and 24 hours later she got a response.

Michelle Havrilla received her dress Monday, the first time she's seen it since her own wedding in 1985.

Police seek man who hit sign with stolen cross

WI AHSWAUBENON — Police in the Green Bay area are seeking a man who stole a large crucifix from a church and used it to damage a sign outside a TV station.

Nativity Parish members waiting for Mass on Friday became terrified when a man, hitting his fists into the chapel, complaining loudly about the Catholic Church. After being asked to leave, he took off with a 5-foot-tall crucifix from behind the altar.

WLUK-TV reported he showed up there. He can be seen on security video swinging the cross at the FOX11 sign before an employee chased him away. He dropped the crucifix across the street.

Couple weds at annual ice fishing derby

NH MEREDITH — Even before the official winners were announced, John Parry was pretty sure he won best catch of the day at the annual Great Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby.

WMUR-TV reported that Parry and his longtime love, Jaye, got married on Lake Winnepesaukee's frozen Meredith Bay on Saturday, the first day of the weekend-long tournament.

The annual event features food, fishing and prizes.

THE CENSUS

40K

The weight in pounds of sweet potatoes a former NFL player gifted his alma mater. The News & Observer of Raleigh reported Jason Brown had the 20 tons of root vegetables dumped on the front lawn of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on Saturday morning to be bagged and donated to local food banks. Brown, a North Carolina native, left the league after seven years in 2012 to start First Fruits Farms.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDY GOLUB/AP

Undressed for the weather

A nude model in a see-through poncho, above, and another nude model, right, pose in the rain during the Polar Bear Paint Body-painting event in New York City's Times Square on Saturday. Dozens of body-painted models walked through the streets during the event, organized by artist Andy Golub.



Woman, 84, accused of shooting at 'noisy' kids

CA REDDING — Northern California sheriff's officials said an 84-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of shooting toward her neighbor's children because they were too noisy.

Authorities said Betty Frances Sanders fired a handgun Friday in the direction of the kids, who are between the ages of 8 and 10, after complaining about the noise from their motorcycles.

The Redding Record Searchlight said the children's mother told deputies she argued with Sanders before the woman opened fire.

Turtle named Booga released after rehab

FL MARATHON — A young loggerhead sea turtle rescued from a fishing trap line was returned to her ocean home off the Florida Keys.

Booga, named after the commercial fishing boat whose crew rescued the 125-pound reptile in late September, was released Sat-

urday at Marathon's Sombbrero Beach as hundreds of Keys residents and visitors watched.

Booga's right rear flipper was amputated due to the severe entanglement injury. Turtle Hospital officials said that even with the missing flipper, Booga has excellent chances to survive and breed.

Aquarium captures video of octopus birth

VA VIRGINIA BEACH — A remarkable video showing the birth of an octopus at the Virginia Aquarium has been viewed more than 1 million times on social media.

The clip shows a baby Caribbean reef octopus wriggling out of a flowerlike section of eggs. Almost immediately, the colorless creature's cells fire pigment, giving it a brownish hue. It waxes its tiny arms and shoots off into the water.

Aquarium spokesman Matthew Klepeisz said researchers theorized that the swift pigment flow is either due to the stress of being born or an instinct to camouflage fast.

Bear wakes up early and attacks dog, owner

ME DEDHAM — Bear attacks are unusual and even rarer in the winter when bears are supposed to be hibernating. But a Maine man said that's just what happened.

Dustin Gray, 29, said a black bear lunged at him and his 11-month-old puppy. The 6-foot-5 man told the Bangor Daily News that he punched and kicked the 150-pound bear until it fled and knocked him over in the process. Gray suffered scratches and bruises, but his Labrador mix, Clover, suffered severe puncture wounds. Nicole Ireland at Penobscot Veterinary Services, where the dog was being treated, said Clover's injuries were "consistent with a large animal attack."

Girl wraps leash around neck; mom arrested

NH HUDSON — Police said a 3-year-old New Hampshire girl wrapped a retractable dog leash around her neck and couldn't breathe and her mother was charged with en-

dangering the welfare of a child.

They said the toddler was left unattended in the living room of a home for an extended period of time Jan. 27 while the leash was on an ottoman.

Police said the girl wrapped the leash tightly around her neck multiple times. They responded to a 911 call, found the girl alert and took her to a hospital.

Woman accused of shooting driver in face

PA CHURCHILL — Police said a woman is accused of shooting a man in the face during an argument while they were driving through a Pittsburgh-area borough.

Allegheny County police said officers and paramedics were called to an intersection shortly before 2:30 a.m. Saturday.

They found a 31-year-old man who was taken to a hospital and later listed in stable condition.

Police took Taneisha Buice, 32, into custody and charged her with attempted homicide, aggravated assault and reckless endangering.

From wire reports

FACES



John Oliver is the host of "Last Week Tonight." The HBO show explores one topic in depth each week, including net neutrality.

By DAVID BAUDER
Associated Press

HBO's John Oliver so relished being able to trash AT&T's cellphone service that he can't imagine doing "Last Week Tonight" under corporate restrictions.

His network's corporate parent, Time Warner, is waiting to see whether a proposed takeover by AT&T will be approved. Oliver's show, which begins its fifth season on Sunday, has been able to operate with freedom in part because HBO's business depends on subscribers instead of advertisers, and he's become quite

accustomed to it. "We were drawing a line in the sand," Oliver said Monday, referring to an episode last season that discussed corporate mergers, including Time Warner's. "I don't anticipate the ground underneath us shifting, and if it does, that is going to be a problem. We'll go down screaming."

He said he realizes that "Last Week Tonight" is lucky to have the ability to do the lengthy, journalism-style explorations of issues and the jokes it gets to do along the way.

"Being able to point out that this product is (lousy) and that tastes terrible, it's really great to have that kind of freedom," he said.

Free reign

Oliver relishes being able to do TV show without restrictions

Being able to point out that [a] product is (lousy) and that tastes terrible, it's really great to have that kind of freedom. It's addictive."

Danielle Herrington covers Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue

From wire reports

Danielle Herrington is the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit cover model for 2018.

The magazine revealed its swimsuit edition cover Tuesday. Herrington is the third black woman to appear on the cover of the annual issue that launched in 1964.

Beoncé appeared on the cover in 2007. Tyra Banks was the cover model in 1996 and 1997.

Herrington first appeared in the magazine's swimsuit issue last year.

Sports Illustrated Swimsuit editor MJ Day says that even though the issue was conceived and shot before the #MeToo movement heated up last fall, it's about more than just women in swimsuits. Day says the magazine is "creating and giving platforms to these women" and presenting them as multidimensional people.

Rep: Smashing Pumpkins tried to include bassist

A spokesperson for The Smashing Pumpkins said the band has tried to include ex-bassist D'arcy Wretzky in its upcoming reunion though she claims she has been excluded.

The representative said Monday that band members Billy Corgan, James Iha and Jimmy

Chamberlin haven't played a show with Wretzky in nearly two decades though they've reached out to the performer.

"In reuniting The Smashing Pumpkins, the band's dedication remains to its fans and its music. To that, James Iha, Jimmy Chamberlin, and William Corgan haven't played a show with D'arcy Wretzky for over 18 years. But it's not for a lack of trying," read the statement to The Associated Press. "Despite reports, Ms. Wretzky has repeatedly been invited out to play with the group, participate in demo sessions, or at the very least, meet face-to-face, and in each and every instance she always deferred. We wish her all the best, and look forward to reconnecting with you all very soon."

Last month Wretzky told the music website BlastEcho she would not be involved in the reunion. She offered more details in a BlastEcho story Sunday, saying Corgan invited her to join the band again but later rescinded.

Other news

■ Multiple accusations of sexual exploitation won't keep James Franco away from "The Duke." Writer Megan Abbott told Entertainment Tonight Sunday that the 39-year-old actor will "of course" return to the HBO show on which he plays twins running the front

for the mob in Times Square, for its sophomore season. Five women accused Franco of inappropriate conduct and abuse of power in an early January Los Angeles Times story. Franco has denied the allegations.

■ Pulitzer Prize winner Doris Kearns Goodwin will have a new book out this year: "Leadership" will be published in September. Simon & Schuster told The Associated Press on Tuesday. The book will compare the approaches of four presidents that Goodwin has written about before: Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson.

■ Seal will not face criminal charges in a sexual battery complaint filed last month by his ex-neighbor, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office said Monday. The case—in which actress Tracey Birdsall claimed the "Kiss from a Rose" singer groped her and tried to kiss her—was rejected due to a lack of witnesses and evidence, as well as an expired statute of limitations.

■ Dess's latest project is all words. The Minneapolis-based rapper-singer has a deal with Dutton for a book of essays, the publisher told The Associated Press on Monday. "My Own Devices: True Stories from the Road on Music, Science, and Senseless Love" is scheduled to come out

Sept. 18. She is a member of the indie group Doomtree and her solo album, "Chime," comes out Feb. 23.

■ Parkinson's disease has forced legendary guitarist Glenn Tipton to drop out of the upcoming Judas Priest tour. The British rockers say Tipton is stepping down from touring due to a treatment, which began to afflict him a decade ago.

■ Vic Damone, whose mellow baritone once earned praise from Frank Sinatra as "the best pipes in the business," has died in Florida at the age of 89. His daughter said Victoria Damone told The Associated Press in a phone interview Monday that her father died Sunday at a Miami Beach hospital from complications of a respiratory illness. Damone's easy-listening romantic ballads brought him million-selling records and sustained a half-century career.

■ Country singer Daryle Singletary, who sang songs like "Let Her Lie" and "Too Much Fun," has died. A publicist says Singletary died at his home in Nashville, Tenn., on Monday at age 46. Singletary was born in Cairo, Ga., and was among a wave of country traditionalists in the late 1990s.

■ Marty Allen, the baby-faced, bug-eyed comedian with wild black hair who was a staple of TV variety shows, game shows and

"It's addictive." Besides some topical jokes, the show's centerpiece is one lengthy exploration of an issue each week. Oliver tackles topics that would seem television-unfriendly, like net neutrality or health care financing, and teaching an audience while having some laughs along the way.

He's reluctant to talk about any topics that the show will cover during a new season, both to preserve the element of surprise and because they probably wouldn't sound appetizing. "If we say to people, 'look, we're going to talk about Sinclair Broadcasting,' you'll think 'good,' that's a half-hour extra sleep I'll have," he said.

The show constantly has to weigh how much of the actions of the Trump administration to address, both because he doesn't want to change its formula, and since topics are picked clean by daily topical comedy shows. News, and the humor pulled out of it, moves so fast that programs like the "Late Show" had to go live after Trump's State of the Union address because the jokes would seem stale 24 hours later, he said. But there are some topics he likes when "I look corners and upon the demonstrations in Charlottesville, Va.—where not talking about it would be like an editorial decision in itself, he said.

Despite starting its fifth season, Oliver said the show still feels new. He's contracted to do two more seasons, and an HBO executive sitting near him at a news conference indicated the network would like more.

"I still feel there is a lot of room to get better," Oliver said. "I don't feel like we're at cruising altitude yet."



SPORTS ILLUSTRATED/AP

Danielle Herrington is on the cover of the 2018 Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition.

talk shows for decades, died Monday in Las Vegas. He was 95.

■ Broadway star and five-time Tony Award nominee Jan Maxwell has died. She was 51. Her husband, actor and playwright Robert Emmet Lunney, says she died on Sunday at her Manhattan home following a long battle with cancer.

■ SAG-AFTRA, the union representing about 160,000 actors and other performers, is trying a new approach to protect its members from sexual harassment. The guild released a code of conduct on Saturday that outlines best practices for the handling of workplace sexual harassment.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Amazon cuts some workers as it adds jobs elsewhere

By **ABHA BHATTARAI**
The Washington Post

Amazon.com is laying off hundreds of workers in its Seattle headquarters and beyond, reversing a yearslong trend of breakneck hiring and expansion, according to a person familiar with the company's decision.

The online giant, which last year added nearly 130,000 employees globally, will cut "a few hundred" positions in its Seattle headquarters, as well as hundreds more globally, the person said. Layoffs began a few weeks ago,

part of a strategy to trim parts of the existing retail business in favor of adding jobs to support rapidly-growing areas, such as its Amazon Echo devices, digital entertainment and video, and the company's Amazon Web Services cloud business, said the person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal plans. The Seattle Times originally reported the news Monday.

"As part of our annual planning process, we are making head count adjustments across the company — small reductions in a couple of places and aggressive

hiring in many others," an Amazon spokesman said in an email. "For affected employees, we work to find roles in the areas where we are hiring."

As one of the country's largest private employers, Amazon has been hiring aggressively in recent years. Last year, the company announced plans to hire 50,000 warehouse workers, staging a one-day blitz dubbed "Amazon jobs day." The company is also scouting sites for a second North American headquarters, where it plans to employ as many as 50,000



Ted S. Warren/AP

People walk outside Amazon.com's corporate headquarters in Seattle on Monday. After a ramp-up of hiring last year, Amazon says it will cut hundreds of positions in Seattle and elsewhere.

full-time workers, many of them in high-paying office jobs. Those plans will not be affected by the latest layoffs, according to the person.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 14)	\$1.2674
Dollar buys (Feb. 14)	60.789
British pound (Feb. 14)	\$1.43
Japanese yen (Feb. 14)	106.00
South Korean won (Feb. 14)	1,056.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.3903
Canada (Dollar)	1.2512
China (Yuan)	6.3462
Denmark (Krone)	6.0241
Egypt (Pound)	17.0669
Euro	\$1.2366/0.8087
Hong Kong (Dollar)	1.21214
Hungary (Forint)	252.53
Israel (Sheqel)	3.5363
Japan (Yen)	107.63
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3001
Norway (Krone)	7.8933
Philippines (Peso)	52.03
Poland (Zloty)	3.38
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7499
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3274
South Korea (Won)	1,063.78
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9324
Thailand (Baht)	31.51
Turkey (New Lira)	3.8069

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (U.S. dollars), commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 12, 2018

Dow Jones Industrial	410.37
	24,601.27
Nasdaq composite	107.47
	6,981.96
Standard & Poor's 500	36.45
	2,656.00
Russell 2000	13.14
	1,490.98

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.50
Discount rate	2.00
Federal funds market rate	1.42
3-month bill	1.57
30-year bond	3.14

Apple may have muscle to knock off Spotify

By **STEVEN ZEITCHIK**
The Washington Post

Apple is turning up the volume on Apple Music, the streaming subscription that comes loaded on its devices, including the new HomePod smart speaker.

But that could mute the potential of Spotify, the independent music subscription service that aims to go public this year. "We are at an inflection point in digital music," said Lloyd Greif, who runs Greif & Co., a Los Angeles-based investment company specialized in entertainment and media. "If Spotify doesn't make a move, Apple could be dominating within 12 months. Apple is coming for them and they can't stand still."

Since it launched nearly three

years ago, Apple Music has tried hard to make inroads against Spotify. The Swedish company, founded in 2008, entered the U.S. market in 2011 and quickly began accumulating subscribers with its tantalizing offer of millions of songs at the swipe of a finger. (It also offers an ad-supported service that generates far less revenue.)

As of late 2017, Spotify had 18.2 million subscribers in the U.S. compared with Apple Music's 1.5 million, according to Billboard. Both charge \$9.99 monthly for their primary service. (Globally, Spotify has a significant advantage — 140 million active users, according to the company, nearly twice Apple's tally.)

But Apple is gaining on Spotify. According to a Wall Street Jour-

nal story, Apple currently has a 5 percent monthly growth rate in paid U.S. subscribers compared with 2 percent for its chief competitor. If that holds, Apple will surpass the Swedish firm by summer — especially salient given Spotify's plans for a U.S. IPO in the coming months.

Apple and Spotify declined to comment.

Apple is bidding for a music-streaming edge by locking users into its universe of products. Apple Music works far more easily on HomePod, which debuted Friday, than other music streamers. That both incentivizes people to buy HomePod and, maybe more importantly, gives consumers who have HomePod reason to sign up for the service.

Streaming now accounts for 62

percent of music revenues in the U.S., according to the Recording Industry Association of America, thanks to Apple Music and Spotify, as well as less popular services from Pandora, Amazon and YouTube.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Stripes SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Attorneys 178

UPI2
RECHTSANWÄLTE
FACHANWÄLTE | NOTARE

U.S. & GERMAN ATTORNEYS

US & German Divorces • Support Issues
Wills and Probate • Employment
EEO • MSPB • Personal Injury
Contractor Issues • Tax

CALL 069-299-2069-0
email: maiss@up12legal.de

Dental 902

American Doctors & Staff

Services Offered:
Family Dentistry
Certified Orthodontics
Crowns and Veneers
Implant Surgery
Zoom Teeth Whitening
Wisdom Teeth Surgery
Nitrous Oxide
Saturday & Evening Appointments
Caring, Friendly American Staff

LOCATIONS

Wiesbaden Dental Care
06119 887 2650
Bahnstrasse 14, 65205 Wiesbaden
Wiesbadendental.com

Ramstein Dental Care
06371 406230
Post Strasse 1, 66877 Ramstein
Ramsteindental.com

UNITED CONCORDIA

Certified American Dental Hygienists
TRICARE Preferred Provider

Transportation 944

VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service
- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

For Further Information Please Contact

GERMANY +49-(0)6134-2592730 0800-CARSHIP (Germany only) info@transglobal-logistics.de www.transglobal-logistics.de	UNITED KINGDOM +44-(0)1638-515714 enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk www.carshipuk.co.uk	U.S.A +1-972-662-1670 Ext. 1701 +1-800-264-8167 (US only) info@tgalus www.tgalus
---	---	---

For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations

Trans Global
LOGISTICS EUROPE GMBH

Transportation 944

Interglobal Shipping GmbH
Specialized Shipping to/from the US & Canada
Autos, Household Goods, Personal Belongings
Contact your Pro's at the Docks today!!!
info@interglobalshipping.de
www.interglobalshipping.de

Tel: (0421) 540-0550 Fax: (0421) 540-0565
Toll Free: 0800-000-6311

Transportation 944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA

WSA
WORLD WIDE SHIPPING AGENCY

OPENING HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri
0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de
Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

Are you in the picture?

Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES
However you read us, wherever you need us.

Want a better picture?

You'll get one - just by reading Stars and Stripes military news coverage.

In print • Online at stripes.com •
Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES

Free Classifieds!

Visit Stripes.com for details.

STARS AND STRIPES

Round-the-world news for America's military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill. Also available on mobile apps for Android smartphones and as an iOS app for both iPhone and iPad.

STARS AND STRIPES
Mobile • Online • Print

STARS AND STRIPES

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Lt. Col. Michael C. Bailey, Europe commander
Lt. Col. Richard McClintic, Pacific commander
Harry Eley, Europe Business Operations

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stripes.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com
Tina Croley, Managing Editor for Content
croley.tina@stripes.com
Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com
Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
gromelski.joe@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast
Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9350, DSN (314)583.9350
Pacific
Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81.422.552.2511 ext. 88380, DSN (315)227.7380
Washington
Joseph Cacioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacioli.joseph@stripes.com
(+1)202(761)0908, DSN (312)763.0908
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
Robert Reismann, reismann.robert@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9150, DSN (314)583.9150
Europe
Van Rowell, rowell.van@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9111, DSN (314)583.9111
Pacific
Marl Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81.3 6835.3171, DSN (315)229.3171

CONTACT US

Washington
tel: (+1)202-761-0900; DSN (312)763.0900;
529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC
20045-1301
Reader letters
letters@stripes.com
Additional contacts
stripes.com/contacts

OMBUSMAN

Tobias Naegle

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information from the government's attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman.tobias@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.761.0900.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0471900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AF 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AF 96301-5002.

This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2018

stripes.com

OPINION

Weinstein Co. sale must put victims first

By NOAH FELDMAN
Bloomberg View

New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman effectively blocked a sale of the failing Weinstein Co. on Sunday by suing it for violating state sex discrimination laws. Is he a white knight protecting the interests of Harvey Weinstein's victims? Or a publicity-seeking politician poised to destroy investors' value by forcing the company into bankruptcy?

The answer depends on a simple principle: Any sale should benefit Weinstein's victims, not harm them. When a company is failing in large part because of a legal wrong done by the company or its managers, the company's fate should be determined by considering the interests of the people harmed by the wrongdoing.

Creditors' and shareholders' interests matter too, of course. But they voluntarily assume the risks of doing business, including the risk of bankruptcy. Victims of legal harm, in contrast — like victims of sexual harassment and assault — by definition didn't assume the risk of the wrong done to them. Their right to compensation should come first.

That leaves the more complicated issue of whether the particular proposed sale of The Weinstein Co. would have left the victims better or worse off.

The potential buyers, a group led by former Obama administration official Maria Contreras-Sweet, had reportedly worked out a plan to create a \$30 million fund to compensate the victims. Presumably, this would have come from a combination of insurance and cash taken out of the company.

It's hard to know from the outside whether this report was accurate. A spokesman for the attorney general's office said that

it had reviewed the deal and that it did not include provisions for a compensation fund. Schneiderman's lawsuit specifically alleged that the sale could potentially leave victims "without redress."

It would have been foolhardy for any investor to acquire The Weinstein Co. without having a strategy to manage any liabilities. As of October, more than 90 women said they were victimized by Weinstein, more than a dozen of whom said they had been raped. The list continues to be updated, and the numbers continue to rise. Weinstein has denied allegations of nonconsensual sex, and his attorney said Sunday "there certainly was no criminality" in his actions.

Given those numbers, it seems entirely possible that \$30 million would have been an inadequate sum to designate for compensation. Damages would likely go beyond the direct costs and extraordinary pain and suffering associated with rape and harassment. They could very well include lost wages by actors whose careers Weinstein is said to have torpedoed after his advances were rejected.

For The Weinstein Co. to have been legally liable for Harvey Weinstein's harm to his victims, he would have to have been acting in his official capacity. It would also help the victims' case if the company's employees had helped facilitate his conduct. Both of these circumstances seem relatively easy to prove. So the company could very well be on the hook for much more than \$30 million.

But that judgment should have been up to the buyers, not the New York attorney general. Blocking the sale is justified only if it would preserve more assets for the victims, not fewer.

In general, it's preferable from the victims' perspective for a company that harmed them to stay in business, make a

profit — and be able to afford to compensate them fully for their injuries. If a sale will save a company and simultaneously allow for a compensation fund, it should ordinarily be allowed to go through. If, however, a deal may actually leave the victims out in the cold, it wouldn't be unprecedented for the company to be found in bankruptcy and made to meet the interests of its creditors — including the victims.

That's not uncommon in mass tort cases. Think of A.H. Robins, manufacturer of the Dalkon Shield contraceptive device. It declared bankruptcy, and its acquirer, American Home Products, created a \$2.48 billion victims' compensation fund.

It's a little out of the ordinary to think of a single abuser's conduct as a kind of mass tort. But from the perspective of the company, that's exactly what Harvey Weinstein's conduct seems to have been. He was a central moving force for the company, building relationships and producing films. And in the course of doing so, he was (assuming the truth of the allegations) simultaneously inflicting unlawful harm on many, many women, using the leverage of his official position.

The entire series, then, Harvey Weinstein was a mass tortfeasor. The Weinstein Co. will have to bear the brunt of his actions.

Whether Schneiderman's intervention turns out to have been justified will depend on how fully Weinstein's victims get compensated. The long-term consequences of the entire series of events, however, go beyond that concrete issue. The real societal response to mass torts is to find ways to prevent such harms from occurring in the future. Compensating victims may be part of that process. But on its own, it won't be enough.

Noah Feldman is a Bloomberg View columnist. He is a professor of constitutional and international law at Harvard University.

Bad for business: US has too few truck drivers

By CONOR SEN
Bloomberg View

Economists debate how close the U.S. is to full employment, but less often discussed is where the most crucial constraints are in the labor market.

If we have a shortage of line cooks, the economy can adapt without even adding any new line cooks. The wages for existing line cooks would rise, and dining out would become more expensive, inducing some consumers to eat at home instead. That reduces the business at restaurants and eases the shortage of line cooks.

If we have a shortage of bank tellers, financial institutions can raise pay and train new tellers, or can encourage consumers to switch to online banking.

But truck drivers are a different matter, because of how crucial freight is to the U.S. economy. And for a variety of reasons, it's truck drivers that represent the most worrisome constraint on U.S. economic growth at the moment.

The trucking industry is distinct because it's the lifeblood of moving goods around the country, representing 70 percent of the nation's freight volume by weight. Without enough trucks and drivers on the road, some combination of things is going to happen: Shipments will be delayed, and shippers will have to pay higher prices to get goods to market.

Industry leaders have been complaining about a truck driver shortage for a while, but unlike other industries that have been complaining about worker shortages, we have real evidence both in employment numbers and in business activity that the shortage is starting to have an impact on

the economy. The construction industry has been complaining about a worker shortage for years, and yet in the trailing 12 months construction employment has grown by more than 200,000 workers. Workers may be tough to find, but the industry is figuring it out.

Not so in trucking. The level of employment in the truck transportation industry, the category broken out in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' employment report, is essentially flat, with only a few thousand workers. 2015. This level happens to coincide with the peak attained in the last economic cycle in 2006.

Companies have been highlighting freight constraints in their fourth-quarter earnings calls as being responsible for higher operating costs and lower profit margins. Healy noted that their adjusted gross margin fell by 180 basis points in part because of higher freight costs. Clorox said gross margins are going to fall because of higher transportation costs. Food service company Sysco noted the same. All three are over \$10 billion companies whose shares fell in the last few months.

There's no reason to think the labor situation in the trucking industry should get better anytime soon. Everyone in business and the technology sectors is talking about a future of self-driving trucks — hardly giving prospective workers the incentive to come into the multi-year training of a commercial driver's license for an industry that might be going away. In the short term, truckers must switch from logging their hours on paper to doing it electronically by April 1 or face penalties, which may reduce driver capacity by no longer allowing drivers to log their hours on paper to stay on the road longer.

Some labor market economists are concerned that even though the stated unemployment rate is low, the employment-to-population ratio for prime-age workers between the ages of 25 and 54 is still moderately below the peaks of the last two economic cycles, suggesting the labor market is still not at its full potential. But if we can't find additional truck drivers, this places a constraint on what types of economic growth are still possible. If someone would show up to a homebuilder, or a workers to build products, but the cost of freight is too high because of a truck driver shortage, then that business becomes un-economic and the U.S. economy has forgone output.

This is surge pricing on a grand scale. The risk is that the economy of "moving stuff" in the U.S. becomes like trying to haul a car from a ride-sharing service after midnight on New Year's Eve. We end up in a situation with freight demand — everything from companies trying to ship their products to big box stores, to Amazon deliveries, to fast food restaurants awaiting shipments to homebuilders, to construction building materials — far outstripping supply. In such a situation, prices adjust until they go high enough to kill sufficient demand. And some of the accompanying higher freight costs get passed on to consumers, raising inflation and making the Fed more aggressive in raising rates.

The tragedy of the current economic situation is that a cycle dominated by the promise of a tech-driven automated future may end up too short by an old-economy problem of too few human drivers.

Conor Sen is a Bloomberg View columnist. He is a portfolio manager for New River Investments in Atlanta.

OPINION

Trump, GOP eschew fiscal conservatism

BY ANDREW MALCOLM
Special to McClatchy

Remember Republicans' enduring commitment over most of our lifetimes to eliminate the federal budget deficit and trim the national debt? Well, forget it.

In fact, with the GOP controlling the White House and both houses of Congress, the government this year will likely inflict nearly an additional \$1 trillion on the existing \$20 trillion national debt. And just like your credit card balance, the total federal obligations will also increase right along with now rising interest rates.

Amazingly after all the promises and pleas for more than two generations, it seems everyone, except maybe a show-bout senator making a futile late-night legislative gesture, seems good with such overspending.

This week President Donald Trump unveiled the White House \$4.4 trillion budget, which isn't worth its own printing costs. It includes numerous program cuts and increased military spending.

But White House budgets are always doomed, since Congress thinks it does the annual budgeting, or better said, in recent times fails to do the annual budgeting. But even Trump's 2019 document anticipates a \$984 billion deficit, 48 percent larger than the last complete fiscal year.

Additionally, the administration released a much-anticipated, or at least much-talked about, \$1.5 trillion nationwide infrastructure repair proposal. "We're trying to build roads and bridges," said Trump, "and fix bridges that are falling down. And we have a hard time getting the money. It's crazy."

Everyone pretty well agrees that much of the nation's infrastructure is badly corroded, even crumbling, from delayed maintenance.

"This," a White House briefing official said, "in no way, shape or form should be considered a take-it-or-leave-it proposal. This is the start of a negotiation, bicameral, bipartisan negotiation, to find the best solution for infrastructure in the U.S."

Sounds reasonable. Also hopeful, very hopeful. The usually cranky minority Democrats could be expected to embrace such grand-scale Washington spending, much of which could be touted to their union supporters beginning in an election year.

Trump will need that Democratic support. That's because after the tax cuts that will add over \$1 trillion to the deficit in the next 10 years even with an improving economy, a fair number of Republican hypocrites are now likely to rediscover their yellowing notes on fiscal responsibility.

Those tired words recall how terrible were President Barack Obama's four straight \$1 trillion budget deficits. And how vital it is for the nation's future that current budgets be balanced. And how imperative that an incomprehensible national debt with 15 zeros be slashed over time, likely by some future generation of pols.

The need for bipartisan support also sounds atypically realistic for Capitol Hill, which is good for a change.

Picture this: Trump's proposed infrastructure plan will fall under the umbrellas of at least six committees in the House and another five committees in the Senate, all chaired by Republicans — for now. Even Amazon's vast cloud computers can't calculate all the permutations, obstacles and political cross-currents such a legislative journey would witness.

Perhaps more importantly, all this spending and proposed spending underlines the death of the GOP's traditional fiscal conservatism under the leadership of a political insurgent and real estate bil-



lionaire whose companies declared bankruptcy a half-dozen times.

The longtime Democratic donor promised to nominate conservative judges and cut regulations. He has delivered there. As a campaigner, he complained about the costs of many things. But he never promised fiscal conservatism.

To be fair, Republicans never invited Trump to take them over. In fact, they ran 15 men and one woman to stop him. They each failed because the even wealthier son of a wealthy man heard the heartland anger and frustration all the others missed.

Now, facing the dark prospects of a faring-boding midterm election, his Republican Party is going along with the predictably unpredictable man they chronically grumble about. Gone is the gospel of the House Budget Committee's detailed 10-year tax-

and-spending plans that would eliminate budget deficits for good. Oh, look! That committee's former chairman is now Speaker Paul Ryan.

We'll surely hear more fiscal hyperbole and see some political blocking plays this year from the Congress. Conservatives of the Freedom Caucus. After all, like every House member and a third of the Senate, they too must face voters on Nov. 6.

And as for reforming costly entitlements, the largest expense and real fiscal volcano beneath the molten federal spending dilemma, that must await another year and a crop of elected office-holders brave enough and willing to commit political suicide. In other words, don't hold your breath.

Andrew Malcolm is an author and veteran national and foreign correspondent covering politics since the 1960s.

Media should stop fawning over Kim Jong Un's sister

BY MAX BOOT
The Washington Post

As far back as 1962, the historian and author Daniel J. Boorstin lamented the replacement of real news with the "pseudo-event," a "synthetic novelty" manufactured by "round-the-clock media," as well as the replacement of the hero — someone such as Joan of Arc, William Shakespeare or George Washington "who has shown greatness in some achievement" — with the "celebrity," whom the author described as "a person who is well known for his well-known Spies." Little could Boorstin have imagined that pseudo-events and celebrities would take over not just our culture but also our politics.

After years of drowning in coverage of Princess Diana, Madonna, Beyonce and Jay-Z, "The Real Housewives," Kate Middleton and, of course, the Kardashians, it was only natural that voters would seek a reality television star as the president. The cult of celebrity, having already disfigured our domestic politics, is now infecting foreign policy as well.

Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the despot Kim Jong Un, is being treated as if she were one of our Spies. A headline blared: "Kim Jong Un's sister is stealing the show at the Winter Olympics." One article claimed: "North Korea has emerged as the early favorite to grab one of the Winter Olympics' most important medals: the diplomatic gold." Another declared: "They marveled at her barely-there, barely-remembered lack of bling. They commented on her plain black



BEI JAE-MAN, YONHAP/VIA AP

South Korean President Moon Jae-in talks with Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, during a performance of North Korea's Samjinyong Orchestra in Seoul, South Korea, on Sunday.

outfits and simple purse. They noted the flower-shaped clip that kept her hair back in a no-nonsense style."

Poor Vice President Mike Pence. After agreeing to play second fiddle to a third-rate celebrity in the White House, he found himself at the Olympics overshadowed by someone who makes President Donald Trump look like an intellectual and moral giant. The breathless coverage given to Kim Yo Jong's visit — the first by a member of the royal Kim clan to the South — is not only vapid, it is dangerous and disgusting. This is the modern-day equivalent of celebrating Paula Hitler, Adolf's sister, or

Josef Stalin's children, except that Kim Yo Jong is more complicit in totalitarianism than they were.

The United Nations' Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concluded in 2014 that the North is guilty of "crimes against humanity," including "extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions and other sexual violence, persecution on political, religious, racial and gender grounds, the forcible transfer of populations, the enforced disappearance of persons and the inhumane act of knowingly causing prolonged starvation." As the U.N. experts put it: "The gravity, scale and nature of these violations reveal a state that does not have any parallel in the contemporary world."

The report goes on to detail a sickening litany of abuse. To take one example at random, consider the actions of the State Security Department, North Korea's secret police. In August 2011, SSD agents arrested the 17-year old son of the witness in Hoeryong City, North Hamgyong Province for watching South Korean movies. He was so badly tortured that his left ankle was shattered and his face was bruised and grossly disfigured. The SSD only released him after the family raised a large bribe. Shortly after his release, the boy died from a brain hemorrhage from which he suffered as a result of the beatings endured under interrogation."

Far from making this system more humane, Kim Jong Un has added some perverse touches of his own. He has ordered the executions of his own uncle and half

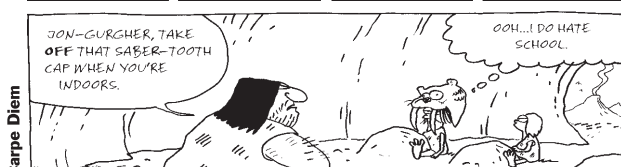
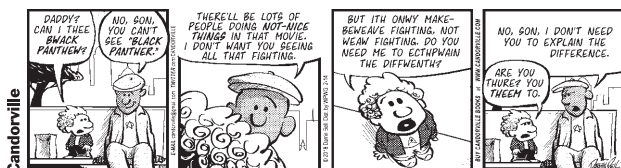
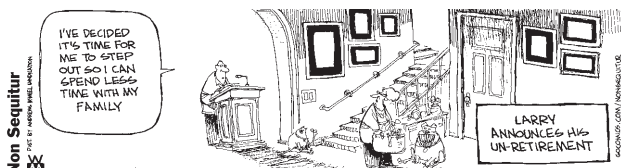
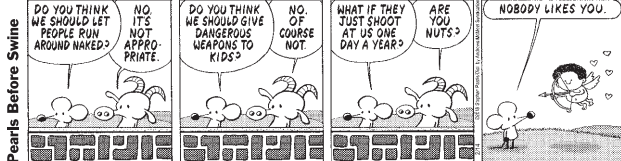
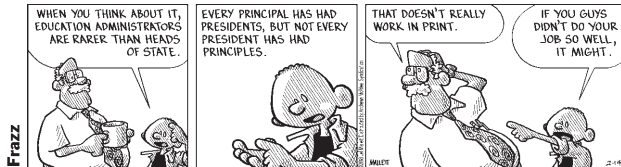
brother — in the latter case using a weapon of mass destruction (the deadly nerve agent VX) at a busy international airport. He also reportedly had his own defense minister blown apart with anti-aircraft guns for falling asleep during one of his harangues.

None of this is a reason for Trump to prematurely attack North Korea because it is developing a nuclear-tipped ICBM capable of hitting the United States. Deterrence and containment are the right way to deal with the North, just as we have dealt with the far bigger threat from Russia for decades. But nor should revulsion at Trump's sber-rattling lead anyone to go to the opposite extreme and imagine that North Korea is a possible partner for peace.

The only reason Kim Jong Un is reaching out to South Korea — he has offered to host President Moon Jae-in for a summit in Pyongyang — is to drive a wedge between Washington and Seoul. The Kim family strategy has remained unchanged since the 1950s: Convince the United States to remove its troops from South Korea, and coerce the South into reunification on the North's terms. In other words, extend the gulag across the entire Korean Peninsula.

It is pathetic to see so much of the media play into Kim's evil hands with breathless coverage of his little sister at the Winter Olympics — a "pseudo-event" if there was one.

Max Boot, a Washington Post columnist, is the Jeanie J. Kirkpatrick senior fellow for national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of "The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam."



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12					13				14				
15					16				17				
18								19	20				
25	26	27			28	29			30	31	32		
33					34				35				
36					37				38				
					39	40			41	42			
43	44				45				46		47	48	49
50					51	52	53						
54					55				56				
57					58				59				

ACROSS

- 1 Cattle group
- 5 Even so
- 8 Power co. supply
- 12 Addict
- 13 Stop — dime
- 14 "The Lion King" lion
- 15 Gambler's best friend?
- 17 Use scissors
- 18 Sound
- 19 Chopin pieces
- 21 Hip
- 24 Slithery fish
- 25 Leer at
- 28 Quick swims
- 30 Kimono closer
- 33 Cato's 502
- 34 Doctrine
- 35 Game official
- 36 Sprite
- 37 Carry on
- 38 Tosses in
- 39 Yalie
- 41 Raw minerals
- 43 Raptor's claws
- 46 Waffle topper
- 50 Starting
- 51 Daily Planet reporter
- 54 Fast time
- 55 Constitution letters
- 56 "Exodus" author
- 57 Shrewd

DOWN

- 1 Luau entertainment
- 2 Jacob's twin
- 3 Sitcom star Foxx
- 4 Overnight package cooler
- 5 One of us
- 6 Env. insert
- 7 Seize
- 8 Follow
- 9 Rent collector
- 10 Writer Wiesel
- 11 Beanies
- 16 Privy
- 20 Try out
- 22 Classic theaters
- 23 Vernacular
- 25 Praise in verse
- 26 Baseball's Hodges
- 27 From cradle to grave
- 29 Equal
- 31 Nap site
- 32 Conditions
- 34 Clone
- 38 Sanctuary
- 40 Like some goals
- 42 Curvy letter
- 43 Body powder
- 44 Cruising
- 45 Punch
- 47 Exceptional
- 48 Squad
- 49 Mexican money
- 52 Sugar suffix
- 53 Belief

Answer to Previous Puzzle

E	R	G	O	G	E	L	G	U	A	M
L	I	E	A	R	I	O	R	C	A	
M	O	N	T	A	G	E	S	O	A	H
		C	I	A	T	A	B	L	E	D
S	T	O	R	M	T	E	T	E		
C	O	P	Y	M	O	N	T	R	E	A
A	T	E	M	A	R	I	A	B	R	A
M	O	N	T	A	N	A	N	S	O	L
		O	A	T	H	A	N	N	O	Y
E	S	K	I	M	O	J	I	C	E	
G	A	I	L	M	O	N	T	A	G	U
O	G	L	E	A	R	C	K	E	N	T
S	E	N	D	N	E	A	Y	E	A	S

2-14

CRYPTOQUIP

COTJFSRW PYWOC MCRG SY
ZR ERWL SWRFLG, ZMS J
PMRCC WRNRFTSL SIRL IBER

HBTTRF YMS YH HBNSJYF.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A CERTAIN LARGE WADING BIRD TOTALLY LACKED FEATHERS, DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE STORK NAKED?
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals S


FREE AD Guidelines:

- Free ads are available only DOD ID Card holders selling personal merchandise.
- Ads may contain up to 32 words. All Ads must contain price and contact information. No websites will be accepted in Free ads.
- Stars and Stripes reserves the right to re-classify, rewrite and reject any ads.

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

CLASSIFIED

Go to stripes.com to place your free ad. *Sell fast/ Buy fast*

When you see this  camera icon go to stripes.com to view the uploaded photo.

Advertising:	Kristi Kimmel kimmel,kristi@stripes.com +49(0)631-3615-9013 DSN 314.583.9013
Circulation:	Van Rowell rowell,van@stripes.com +49(0)631,3615,9111 DSN 314.583,9111
Reader Letters:	letters@stripes.com

Advertising:	Kristi Kimmel kimmel,kristi@stripes.com +49(0)631-3615-9013 DSN 314.583,9013
Circulation:	Robert Reismann reismann,robert@stripes.com +49(0)631,3615,9150 DSN 314.583,9150
Reader Letters:	letters@stripes.com

Advertising:	Yuko Saito saito,yuko@stripes.com (81-3) 6385,3267 DSN 315,229,3267
Circulation:	Mari Matsumoto SSPcirculation@stripes.com +81(3) 6385,3171 DSN 315,229,3171
Reader Letters:	letters@stripes.com

Classifieds EUROPE

For information on Commercial Rates: CIV: 0631-3615-9012 or DSN: 583-9012

Announcements 040

Automotive 140

Tax Assistance 940

SCAM FADS

Classifieds scams can target both sellers and buyers with classifieds advertisements.

Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam Fads are:

- Vehicle buyers wanting to buy sight unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.
- People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

SELLER BEWARE

Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property. Not all potential buyers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale. Stars and Stripes is not liable for the contractual relationship between sellers and buyers of merchandise advertised in the newspaper or on the web site.

H&R BLOCK[®]

Germany H&R Block Tax Offices Get face-to-face tax help.

Ramstein 06371-8020410	Wiesbaden 06134-256963	Vilseck 01735-736112
---------------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------

Email: eclemons@hrblock.com

Autos for Sale • Germany 142	Travel 1000
---------------------------------	-------------

Auto - Quality, Pre-owned US SPEC Vehicles www.vilseckautosales.com
Free Europe-wide delivery

Writer in Garmisch
Hotel Forsthaus Oberau 8 km N of Garmisch Hot tub/sauna Steam PP, DBL, occp. free bkrfst, dogs welcome. 08824-9120 www.forsthaus-oberau.de

Want a better picture?



You'll get one – just by reading Stars and Stripes military news coverage.

In print • Online at stripes.com • Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Round-the-world news for America's military.



Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill. Also available on mobile apps for Android smartphones and as an iOS app for both iPhone and iPad.

SPORTS BRIEFS/WINTER OLYMPICS

Briefly

Northeastern claims Beanpot

BOSTON — Adam Gaudette had a hat trick and Cayden Primeau stopped 38 shots on Monday night to lead Northeastern to a 5-2 victory over Boston University in the 66th Beanpot championship game and give the Huskies the city's college hockey bragging rights for the first time in 30 years.

Nolan Stevens and Trevor Owens also scored for Northeastern, which had lost nine times in the tournament finals since last claiming the trophy in 1988. BU had won 16 times since then — and 30 times in all — beating the Huskies in the final six straight times before this year.

Heid annually on the first two Mondays of February, the tournament pits the area's four college hockey powers against each other. Harvard, the defending champion, beat Boston College 5-4 in overtime in the consolation game.

It was Northeastern's fifth Beanpot title — by far the fewest of the four schools.

Gausman, Orioles reach deal

BALTIMORE — The Orioles avoided an arbitration hearing with pitcher Kevin Gausman, agreeing to a \$5.6 million, one-year contract.

Gausman had asked for \$6,225,000 and the Orioles had submitted \$5.3 million when proposed salaries were swapped last month, making the settlement \$162,500 below the midpoint. He earned \$3.45 million last year in his first of four arbitration-eligible seasons.

His deal includes bonuses of \$50,000 each for 25, 30, 33 starts; \$50,000 if he makes the All-Star team; and \$50,000 if he wins a Gold Glove.

Gausman's hearing had been scheduled for Wednesday. With the agreement announced Tuesday, Baltimore avoided arbitration with all seven arbitration-eligible players.

Gausman went 11-12 with a 4.68 ERA last season, making a career-high 34 starts with a personal-best 179 strikeouts.

Notre Dame's appeal denied

The NCAA denied Tuesday Notre Dame's appeal of a decision to vacate 21 football victories because of academic misconduct, including all 12 wins from the school's 2012 national championship game run.

In a letter to Notre Dame alumni, University President Fr. John Jenkins criticized the decision, saying the penalty was unprecedented considering who was involved in the misconduct, and the school was being punished for rigorously enforcing its honor code. He called the ruling unfair, referencing the recent North Carolina case in which the NCAA did not punish the school after an investigation of athletes taking irregular courses.

The appeals committee was not swayed and upheld the penalty.

Porzingis has surgery on ACL

NEW YORK — All-Star forward Kristaps Porzingis of the New York Knicks has undergone surgery for a torn ligament in his left knee.

The team says the repair of his anterior cruciate ligament was a success. He is expected to be sidelined for much of next season. The operation Tuesday was at the Hospital for Special Surgery in Manhattan.

Porzingis was hurt Feb. 6 when he landed after a dunk and crashed to the court against Milwaukee. The 7-foot-3 Latvian was averaging 22.7 points and an NBA-leading 2.4 blocked shots. He had been chosen for his first All-Star Game.

— Associated Press

Sweeney crashes out of luge

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — American luger Sgt. Emily Sweeney avoided serious injury in a frightening crash that knocked her out of the Pyeongchang Olympics on Tuesday during the final heat of the competition.

The diagnosis was that Sweeney had only some bumps and bruises.

"I'm OK," Sweeney said.

Sweeney lost control around Curve 9, the track's most treacherous spot, and then began careening all over the track. She wound up sliding feet-first up one curve toward the track roof before getting thrown from her sled and eventually tumbling to a stop.

Many in the crowd looked at the monitors, horrified. The stands were filled with fans cheering raucously, and they immediately went silent waiting for some sort of sign that Sweeney would be all right.

It took several minutes for Sweeney to get to her feet, then several more before she could finally start a slow walk to the finish area — surrounded by team and on-site medical personnel.

"I've never been so relieved that when I saw her getting up and walking," said American teammate Summer Britcher, choking back tears.

Curve 9 has been a problem for sliders throughout the early portion of the Olympics, causing many to skid, lose control and lose some time. Crashes, however, have not come as often as they did in the 2006 and 2010 Games, both of which left athletes openly complaining about track safety.

Later in the final run, Britcher lost control at the start and collided with some walls — but got down the track without crashing or serious injury.

Sweeney gave a grimaced smile and a wave to a group of soldiers cheering her on as she walked the final steps to the ambulance. The Eighth Army brought about 100 miles from Camp Humphreys, to cheer on Sweeney and fellow soldier-competitors.

These were the first Olympics for Sweeney. She is on the U.S. luge team with two other soldiers, Sgt. Matt Mortensen and Sgt. Taylor Morris.

Most of the Army Olympians are part of the World Class Athlete Program, which



ANDY WONG/AP

Emily Sweeney of the United States brakes Tuesday after her third run during the women's luge final at the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Sweeney crashed during her fourth run and failed to finish, but wasn't seriously injured.

was established in 1997 to give soldier-athletes a chance to show off their skills in international competitions such as the Olympics and the Paralympics. Soldiers

must be nationally ranked in their sport to participate.

Stars and Stripes reporters Kim Gamel and Marcus Fichtl contributed to this story.

Germany's Geisenberger takes gold

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — Natalie Geisenberger refuses to call herself the best women's luge athlete ever.

The history books may do it for her.

Germany has yet another Olympic gold medalist after Geisenberger prevailed in the women's luge final on Tuesday — her second consecutive title and one that added yet another page to her burgeoning résumé of accomplishments.

"The most of what you reach in sport is an Olympic gold medal," Geisenberger said.

And now, no luger has ever won more gold than Geisenberger. It's the third gold in her collection, the two singles wins now paired with the team relay win from the Sochi Games. That ties her with Georg Hackl and Felix Loch — both fellow Germans, of course — for the most in Olympic history.

She'll go for a fourth gold later this week



WONG MAYE-E/AP

Germany's Natalie Geisenberger celebrates winning the gold medal in the women's luge Tuesday in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

in the Pyeongchang team relay.

"For me, it was the most big goal or dream — I would say dream — that I wanted to reach," Geisenberger said.

Geisenberger's winning time for four runs at the Alpensia Sliding Center was 3 minutes, 5.232 seconds. German teammate Dajana Eitberger was second, nearly four-tenths of a second back. Alex Gough was third for Canada, giving that nation its long-awaited first Olympic luge medal.

For the Americans, it was a night that won't be forgotten, for an array of reasons.

Erin Hamlin's long career ended with a sixth-place finish in her fourth Olympics, while Summer Britcher struggled and finished 19th and Emily Sweeney failed to finish at all after losing control of her sled on the final run in what was a horrifying crash.

Hamlin was all smiles as she left, completely at ease at the end of a career that saw her win 23 World Cup medals on 12 different tracks, two world championships and Olympic bronze at Sochi in 2014.

WINTER OLYMPICS

Korean Marvel: Yun might be a hero

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Korean skeleton star Yun Sungbin is absolutely obsessed with Iron Man. He collects the figurines. He's seen the movies. He knows every aspect of the superhero's story.

Some even call him Iron Man. He might be called Gold Man soon.

South Korea has 26 gold medals in its Winter Olympic history — all on ice, all with skates involved, most from speedskating. The nation doesn't have much of a sliding history, but has made great strides as it builds momentum to host the Pyeongchang Games. And Yun is certainly one of the host nation's top gold hopefuls, looking to parlay his home-track advantage into big things.

"I do believe that if I focus on what I should do, then everything will come out great," Yun told Korean media in early January.

He could be right. Yun was the only slider on the circuit to finish first or second in each of the first six World Cup races this season. If there's any pressure on him as he goes into his second Olympics, and obviously his first at home, it's not showing.

He will face serious competition from the Latvian brother duo of Martins Dukurs and Tomass Dukurs, while Matt Antoine of the United States — a medalist from the Sochi Games — has been trying to build his entire season around peaking in Pyeongchang.

In women's skeleton, Brittan McIntyre has a chance at a third straight gold from a third different woman. Laura Deas will look to carry on her team's tradition of winning the sport's biggest race,

SKELETON



DARRYL DYCK, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Yun Sungbin, of South Korea, is obsessed with Iron Man. He may be called Gold Man soon. He is the only slider on the World Cup circuit to finish first or second in each of the first six races this season.

after Amy Williams in 2010 and Lizzy Yarnold in 2014. Since skeleton returned to the Olympic program in 2002, a British woman has won gold, silver or bronze every time.

Some things to know about skeleton at the Pyeongchang Olympics:

WHAT IS IT: No, you may not call it "theadfirst luge." Skeleton sliders go down the track head-first, on a very different sled than those in the luge world, but can reach speeds exceeding 80 mph. There's a sprint at the start as racers hang onto their sled, then they jump aboard and go on a wild ride for the next minute or so.

MEDAL FAVORITES: The women's race could be wide open with no fewer than 10 medal contenders from seven countries. Yun will be the men's favorite, and since the host Koreans have far more runs down the track at the Alpensia Sliding Center than

anyone else his familiarity there could be the edge he needs.

BEST RIVALRY: Nothing like a sibling rivalry, and in this case, poor Tomass Dukurs. The Latvian is one of the sport's very best sliders right now, but is also second-best in his own family. His brother Martins Dukurs finishes ahead of him more than 90 percent of the time when they've both been entered in the same international competition.

RULE CHANGES: A World Cup event has two heats on one day; an Olympic competition has four heats over two days.

RUSSIA FALLOUT: These are strange times in the Olympic world because of the fallout from the doping scandal that ensnared the host Russians at the Sochi Games four years ago. A pair of Russians had medals stripped, only to have them reinstated — for now, at least. So Katie Uhlaender, the hard-luck American veteran who has spent half her life chasing an Olympic medal, still doesn't have one. She finished fourth in Sochi, and was widely expected to be promoted to bronze until Elena Nikitina had her third-place finish in Sochi reinstated. "I have to focus on what I can control, and I have to focus on myself," Uhlaender said.

OLYMPIAN EFFORT: John Daly of the U.S. will make headlines for his super-coiffed hair. He retired after a last-run disaster in Sochi, then came back while holding down a full-time job, and everything he's done over the last two years has been about getting ready for this race. He'll go for broke, and it may net him a medal.



ANDY WONG/AP

John Daly of United States practices during a training run for the men's skeleton in Pyeongchang, South Korea, on Tuesday.

Speedskating

Dutch still golden, Americans falter

Associated Press

GANGNEUNG, South Korea — The Olympic Oval has turned into the royal House of Orange — and not because Dutch King Willem-Alexander is there most nights. It's all about the speedskating.

Kjeld Nuis made it four gold medals in four races for the Netherlands, a run nearly beyond belief.

"This is no longer normal," Nuis said Tuesday after winning the 1,500 meters.

Moving in a blur of orange early on with a blistering pace, Nuis swept past his toughest opponents to take home gold. In second, of course, was another Dutchman — teammate Patrick Roest.

The Dutch have now won eight of 12 medals at the Pyeongchang Games, keeping them on the stunning medal pace set at the 2014 Sochi Games when they finished with 23 out of 36.

American skaters disappointed again with Joey Mantia finishing eighth and Shani Davis crossing in 19th position, leaving the United States with another bad start in the Olympics after they were shut out in Sochi.

It wasn't any better in short track on Tuesday.

American teenager Maame Biney, an Olympic rookie at 18, finished last in her 500-meter quarterfinal. She had to go up against Chinese veteran Fan Xinxin, who along with Russian Sofia Prosvirnova, crowded out Biney as she tried to go for the lead early in the race.

"I'm still in that learning pro-

cess of just trying to get back really quick because I don't usually get bumped in the start," Biney said. "I'm usually first or second. I'm going to have to figure out how to get back in the rhythm."

The 500 was Biney's only individual event of the games and it left her eager for more.

"Just for next time, the next four years, I'm going to try and find that rhythm and keep going," she said.

Arianna Fontana of Italy won the event, making her the second woman to claim short track medals at four different Olympics.

There was a photo finish for first involving Fontana and Choi Min-jeong of South Korea.

In the men's 1,000 meters, American John-Henry Krueger advanced to Saturday's quarterfinals by winning his heat and avoiding a collision that knocked down two other skaters.

His teammate, J.R. Celski, wasn't so lucky.

The three-time Olympian was taken down in a three-man crash and he needs repair work on his right skate. He was in contention early in the re-start before finishing third, one spot out of advancing to the next round.

Krueger and Celski later teamed with Thomas Hong and Aaron Tran for the 5,000 relay heat. They finished third, relegating the U.S. to the B final four years after earning silver in Sochi. That medal represented the only podium finish for the American speedskaters — a long track or short track — in a stunning showing.

Nordic combined at a glance

Competition dates: Normal hill, Feb. 14. Large hill, Feb. 20. Team (large hill), 4x5km race, Feb. 22.

Five-time World Cup winner and Olympic gold medalist Eric Frenzel will be aiming to continue his dominance of Nordic combined at the Pyeongchang Olympics.

The 29-year-old German won the normal hill event in Sochi and finished 10th in the large hill competition after falling ill. He came back to help Germany win silver in the team event.

Over a 10-year career on the World Cup circuit, Frenzel has 42 individual wins and eight team titles to go with three Olympic medals which also include silver in Sochi and bronze in Vancouver.

He won the World Cup for five consecutive years from 2013 and has five World Championship titles.

But Frenzel will have to contend with in-form Japanese skier Akito Watabe. Watabe picked up his third straight Nordic combined World Cup win in Jan. 28 and became only the second athlete to sweep the three-day Seefeld Triple event in Austria.

Watabe has surged to the top of the World Cup standings with the results from Austria, adding to a win earlier this season in Finland.

TRADITIONAL POWERHOUSE: Nordic combined events have been contested since the first Winter Olympics in 1924. Norway has dominated the sport with 30 medals overall and a total of 13 gold medals.

WHAT THEY'RE COMPETING FOR: In Pyeongchang, athletes will contest the 10-kilometer normal hill, the 10-kilometer large hill and the team large hill with a 4x5-kilometer team event.

The sport has been exclusively contested by men at the Olympics since its debut. But that could soon change. Officials of the International Ski Federation are in discussions to have women contest Nordic combined at the 2022 Olympics in Beijing.

MEDAL FAVORITES: Frenzel's main competition in Pyeongchang is likely to come from Norwegians Jan Schran and Joergen Graabak, who won gold in the large hill event in Sochi, and Watabe.

—By Jim Armstrong, Associated Press

WINTER OLYMPICS



United States goalie Brandon Maxwell, center, reaches for a puck as Jordan Greenway, left, and Ryan Donato watch during practice last week in Gangneung, South Korea.

KIUCHIRO SATO/AP

And so it begins

Tournament full of past, future NHL talent

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

M GANGNEUNG, South Korea — Ark Arcobello had a choice between shuttling to and from the minor leagues in North America and taking his talents to Europe.

Arcobello, who went to Europe for a year for some stability before the NHL decided not to participate in the Olympics, said he is glad he took the path less traveled because it helped him make the U.S. national team.

"This opportunity kind of solidifies that I made the right decision," said Arcobello, who spent time with the Edmonton Oilers, Nashville Predators, Pittsburgh Penguins, Arizona Coyotes and Toronto Maple Leafs organizations. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and if I'd still be going up and down between the minors and NHL right now, I'd be probably regretting it and wishing that I had left."

Arcobello is one of the poster boys for this unpredictable, wide-open Olympic men's hockey tournament that begins Wednesday with the U.S. against Slovenia and Russia playing Slovakia. Even though current NHL players aren't taking part, 94 of the 300 Olympians have played at least one NHL game and every country has at least one former player.

"People say the NHL's not here, but it's all NHL talent," U.S. defenseman James Wisniewski said. "Maybe it's not the All-Star talent

Men's hockey

Schedule

Wednesday	United States vs. Slovenia
Thursday	Slovakia vs. Russia
Friday	Finland vs. Germany
Saturday	Norway vs. Sweden
Sunday	Czech Republic vs. South Korea
Monday	Switzerland vs. Canada
Tuesday	United States vs. Slovakia
Wednesday	Russia vs. Slovenia
Thursday	Finland vs. Norway
Friday	Sweden vs. Germany
Saturday	Slovakia vs. Slovakia
Sunday	Canada vs. Czech Republic
Monday	South Korea vs. Switzerland
Tuesday	Russia vs. Finland
Wednesday	Germany vs. Norway
Thursday	Czech Republic vs. Switzerland
Friday	Canada vs. South Korea

that they're looking at like a Patrick Kane or (Jonathan) Toews or (Ryan) Getzlaf — those kind of guys. But it's still NHL talent. It's just the guys that you really never heard of because they decided to take the European route."

A lot of them took the European route. Players at the Olympics come from 19 different professional leagues based in 13 countries plus the NCAA and Korea Armed Forces Athletic Corps.

Canada has 23 former NHL players and the U.S. 16, down to Norway and South Korea with two and Slovenia one. Russia might have the two best former NHL stars in Ilya Kovalchuk and Pavel Datsyuk, and Finland the best goaltender now who played in the NHL, in Mikko Koskinen. It's an NHL tournament. Just of the past and future.

"Everybody has a lot of talent here," said Kovalchuk, who leads the favored Russians after playing for the Atlanta Thrashers and New Jersey Devils. "We have a great team. There are five, six teams I think that are in the same level who's got a lot of young kids who will be future NHLers, too."

Soon-to-be NHL talent is everywhere. Sweden defenseman Rasmus Dahlin is expected to be the No. 1 pick in June, and U.S. college players Jordan Greenway and Ryan Donato, Finland defenseman Miro Heiskanen and forward Eeli Tolvanen, and Russia forward Kirill Kaprizov should be there in no time.

Combine that young skill with over 17,000 games of NHL experience, and players expect the quality of hockey to be better than expected.

"I think it's going to shock some people," said U.S. defenseman Bobby Sanguinetti, who played for the New York Rangers and Carolina Hurricanes. "Obviously with the NHL current players not coming, it's a little bit of a different scenario, but there's a lot of great players here that are excited to show what they can bring to the team and with the opportunity to play on the big stage and actually compete for a medal."

Germany coach Marco Sturm, who played 938 regular-season and 68 playoff games in the NHL, said everyone will treat it the same because "there is still gold, silver and bronze."

AP Sports Writer James Ellingworth contributed.

Russians resemble old national teams

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

GANGNEUNG, South Korea — They trudged from their locker room to the practice rink with expressions as blank as their jerseys.

The Russians enter the Olympic men's hockey tournament with their usual businesslike fashion, insisting they are not bothered by the nondescript uniforms and missing coat of arms on their chests. They are officially "Olympic Athletes from Russia" as declared by the International Olympic Committee in the doping scandal fallout, but this is still the same stoic, sometimes prickly group determined to win the gold medal.

"We're still Team Russia," former Mikhail Grigorenko said Tuesday. "Everybody knows where we're coming from and they can't take away who we are just from the jerseys and all that. I think we still have a pretty good team. We have one goal here: to win. So we'll go out there and try to do everything we can to do that."

From the straightforward, non-nonsense approach to the intense, full-speed practices, this is the Russian national team. The style of play has changed from the Cold War era, though this might as well be the Red Army team.

In fact, eight players come from CSKA Moscow, which draws its roots to those storied Soviet teams, plus 15 more from SKA Saint Petersburg, which is far and away the best team in the Kontinental Hockey League. Having 21 of 22 skaters from the same two teams also gives the Russians the kind of chemistry that marked those dominant teams of the past — a chemistry most other teams in the Olympics don't have.

"You play with a lot of the guys on the same team so you move bet-

ter with them on the ice," forward Sergei Shirokov said. "Everyone understands each other perfectly. There is a good atmosphere in the team now."

It's a familiar atmosphere. Even though former NHL players Ilya Kovalchuk, Pavel Datsyuk and Slava Voynov are the only players back from the group that disappointed on home ice in Sochi, the style of play and the trademark Russian firepower is there.

"We're going to skate with the puck pretty hard, not play in D-zone," former Detroit Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs defenseman Alexei Marchenko said. "Try to play in O-zone, out-shift the guys, so just keep the puck in O-zone, shoot more."

Kovalchuk believes the power play will be the key, and it's still dangerous even without Alex Ovechkin and Evgeni Malkin, who are missing the Olympics along with all other NHL players. Russia does few things better than developing offensively gifted forwards, and top Minnesota Wild prospect Kirill Kaprizov is the latest off that assembly line.

There are questions about goaltending. Veteran Vasily Koshechkin will get the nod in the opener Wednesday against Slovakia over New York Rangers top goaltending prospect Igor Shestyorin and Islanders top prospect Ilya Sorokin, though either 22-year-old could become the starter at some point.

And again there's pressure because the Russians are the favorites in the absence of NHL players.

"Maybe it's a little less pressure because we don't play at home, but we'll see," Kovalchuk said. It's always pressure on a Russian team. The fans expect a lot."

AP Sports Writer James Ellingworth contributed.

‘We’re still Team Russia. Everybody knows where we’re coming from and they can’t take away who we are just from the jerseys and all that.’

Mikhail Grigorenko
Team Russia forward



JULIO CORTESZ/AP

Ilya Kovalchuk, of the team from Russia, previously played in the NHL for the Atlanta Thrashers and the New Jersey Devils.

SPORTS



'It's the players' team'
Kerr turns over coaching duties
in rout of Suns » **Page 25**

WINTER OLYMPICS

Unstoppable

California teen Kim dominates field to claim gold in women's halfpipe

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
Associated Press

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — Chloe Kim stamped her name on a new era of snowboarding with a run down the halfpipe that, officially, did not mean anything. To her, it meant everything.

The Olympic gold medal was already hers but she knew she could do better. So she cinched on her gloves, cranked up "Motorsport" on her iPod, said "This one's for you, Grams" — a shout-out to her South Korean grandmother, who was watching her in person for the first time — and dropped into the halfpipe to make history.

On the last run of Tuesday's sun-splashed final, Kim hit back-to-back 1080-degree spins on her second and third jumps — repeating a combination no other woman has ever done in a competition.

She landed them squarely, sent her already super-hyped family at the bottom into overdrive, scored a 98.5 and sent out the message that

everyone from grandma to those at the roots of this sport love to hear: "I knew I wasn't going to be completely satisfied taking home the gold, but knowing that I could've done better."

The 17-year-old from California made it look easy, but only afterward did she concede how difficult the past several months have been. Her story has been told and sold and marketed for gold: Her parents both emigrated to the United States from South Korea, and though it was more coincidence than any grand plan, Kim making her Olympic debut in the country where her family was from set up a sure path to stardom in the halfpipe and beyond.

She has commanded the progression in women's snowboarding for at least two years now, and it was hard to imagine anyone beating her on the sport's biggest stage, at her official coming-out party. But halfpipes are hard, the snow is slippery and nothing is for sure.

SEE KIM ON PAGE 30



Wednesday's medals

- Alpine skiing: Women's slalom
- Biathlon: Women's 15km individual
- Luge: Doubles
- Nordic combined: Normal hill
- Snowboard: Men's halfpipe
- Speedskating: Women's 1,000m

American Chloe Kim soars above the halfpipe at Phoenix Snow Park on Tuesday in the women's halfpipe finals in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

KIM CHULUNG/AP

Army's Sweeney crashes out in luge run » **Page 27**

USA's Ligety pleased with fifth in combined » **Page 29**

US women shut out OAR in hockey » **Page 30**

